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REVOLUTION AND REACTION IN NINETEENTH CENTURY FRENCH LITERATURE

Hätt 'ich gezaudert zu werden,
Bis man mir's Leben gegönnt,
Ich wäre noch nicht auf Erden
Wie Ihr begreifen könnt,
Wenn Ihr seht, wie sie sich geberden.

—Goethe.

There is no philosophy possible where fear of consequences is a stronger principle than love of truth.

—John Stuart Mill.

GEORG BRANDES

REVOLUTION AND REACTION IN NINETEENTH CENTURY FRENCH LITERATURE

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THE REACTION IN FRANCE

INTRODUCTION

A CERTAIN aggregation of personages, actions, emotions and moods, ideas and works, which make their appearance in France, find expression in the French language, and influence French society at the beginning of the nineteenth century, form in my eyes a naturally coherent group, from the fact that they all centre round one idea, namely, the re-establishment of a fallen power. This fallen power is the principle of authority.

By the principle of authority I understand the principle which assumes the life of the individual and of the nation to be based upon reverence for inherited tradition.

That power which is its essential quality, authority owes simply to its own existence, not to reason; it is a result of the involuntary or voluntary subjection of men's minds to existing conditions. Authority had originally only two instruments at its disposal, compulsion and fear, instruments which it will always retain and use; but at an early age it began to call forth such feelings as reverence and gratitude. Men were not ashamed of, did not suffer from, their dependence on authority, when they felt that they owed an obligation to it. The authority of the family, the authority of society, the authority of the state (long synonymous with the will of the despotic ruler) gradually asserted themselves, and supported themselves, one and all, upon a still higher authority, the authority of religion. In it the principle of authority reaches the absolute stage. The will of the Almighty becomes the supreme law, to which all must bow and which must be blindly obeyed.

The principle of authority has had a powerful educative influence on the human race ; but its real mission is to make itself superfluous. At a comparatively low stage man submits to law because it emanates from authority ; at a higher, because he recognises its reasonableness. Where authority is absolute it must, and as a matter of fact does, demand recognition as something mysterious and miraculous, and treat all criticism as rebellion and heresy.

It is its ratification by religion which makes authority absolute. Owing, however, to the manner in which Christianity had developed in Europe, the principle of authority had not as yet manifested itself in that continent in perfect purity. Christianity had (officially at least) proclaimed itself to be the religion of love, the religion of Christ. History shows that what the church in reality laid most weight on was belief in the dogmas of Christianity and in the duty of submission to supernatural authority—not love, but obedience was necessarily of supreme importance to it as well as to the state. So far, however, even the strictest of theologians, priests, and religious writers had employed the language of religious enthusiasm, had proclaimed the message of love along with the doctrines of the faith, and striven not merely to further the cause of authority, but also to win souls. It was not until a majority of the educated minds of many countries freed themselves from the yoke of authority in the domain of the supernatural, and consequently became critically disposed towards it in the political and social domains also, that the principle of authority in its purity and its barrenness began to be vindicated unemotionally, with arguments appealing most frequently to reason alone, but occasionally also to the imagination.

It is possible to champion the principle of authority in church and state, in society and in the family, nay, even in the domain of human knowledge, as the principle of knowledge and of wisdom. During the period of which I purpose describing the spiritual life it was so championed in all those domains, but at the time now referred to it was overthrown in them all.

In order to understand how it came to be resuscitated,

proclaimed, developed, vindicated, established, and finally again overthrown, it is necessary that we should see how, and by virtue of what fundamental principles, it was annulled at the time of the Revolution.

It was not attacked at once in all the different domains; but it became evident that its existence in them all depended upon its existence in what was considered the highest, that of religion. For it was the church which, as authority, imparted authority in all the other spheres of life—to the "king by the grace of God," to marriage as a sacrament, &c. &c.

Therefore the principle of authority in general stood or fell with the authority of the church. When that was undermined, it drew all other authorities with it in its fall.

Not that the man who, in the eighteenth century, laboured more energetically and successfully than any other for the emancipation of the intellect from ecclesiasticism and dogma had foreseen such a result of his labour. Far from it! Voltaire desired no outward revolution. In his little tale, *Le monde comme il va*, the wise Babouc, who is at first utterly revolted by the depravity of the great city of Persepolis, gradually comes to see that the bad state of matters has its good sides; and, when the fate of the city hangs upon his report to the angel Ithuriel, he pronounces himself to be entirely opposed to its destruction. Even the angel does not in the end purpose making any change in the customs of Persepolis, because, "though things are not good, they are certainly bearable." This train of thought can hardly be called revolutionary; and Voltaire is, at least at times, of the same opinion as Babouc. It was always to the sovereigns, not to the peoples, that he appealed to transform his ideas into actions, and he often declared that the cause of kings and of philosophers was one and the same. Hence when Holbach and his collaborators asserted that "hardly once in a thousand years was there to be found amongst these rulers by the grace of God, these representatives of the Deity, a man possessing the most ordinary sense of justice or compassion, or the commonest abilities and virtues," Voltaire could not control his wrath. His

letters to the King of Prussia, too, contain violent outbursts of indignation at *Le Système de la Nature*. He did not recognise himself in these disciples and in these conclusions.

Nevertheless it is Voltaire who constitutes the destructive principle throughout the Revolution, just as it is Rousseau who is the rallying, uniting spirit. For Voltaire had destroyed the principle of authority by vindicating the liberty of thought of the individual, Rousseau had displaced and superseded it by the feeling of universal brotherhood and mutual dependence. What these two great men had planned the Revolution carried into effect; it was the executor of their wills; the thought of the individual became destructive action, and the feeling of mutual dependence, uniting organisation. From Voltaire came the wrath of the revolutionists, from Rousseau their enthusiasm.

I

THE REVOLUTION

AUTHORITY being originally, and in its essence, ecclesiastical and religious, an understanding of the successive developments in the position of the Revolution to church and religion is indispensable to a comprehension of the intellectual reaction which followed. For, as that reaction meant the re-establishment of the principle of authority, it naturally, as well as logically, began with the rehabilitation of the church.

The Revolution was in reality quite as much of a religious as of a political nature. Regarded from one standpoint, it was the practical result of the labours of the great free-thinking philosophers of the eighteenth century. It is to the Revolution of 1789 that we owe the greatest conquest wrested by the human intellect from prejudice and power—liberty of conscience, religious toleration. It is certainly not to the Christian church that humanity is indebted for this inestimable blessing, for the church opposed to the utmost every demand suggestive of it.

At the moment when the Revolution begins, all the preparations for the great encounter between the principle of authority on the one side and the principles of individuality and solidarity on the other are complete. All the leaders, all the knights and squires who are to fight in the great joust, are already at their posts, unknown to each other, unknown to the world, which is soon to ring with their names. They are men with very varied pedigrees and pasts. There are noblemen like Mirabeau, priests like Mauret, Fauchet, and Talleyrand, physicians like Marat, lawyers like Robespierre, poets, philosophers, orators, authors like M. J. Chénier, Condorcet, Danton, and

Desmoulins—a whole host of men of talent and men of character. The church rallies all its forces for a desperate struggle, in which it is doomed to be worsted; the Revolution progresses, first hesitatingly, then threateningly, then irresistibly, finally in the intoxication of victory. With the summoning of the Estates the lists are opened; challenges are exchanged; and the great umpire, history, gives the signal for the fray.

As soon as the Estates are assembled the first and unanimous demand of the clergy is that "the Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion" shall be recognised as the national religion, with the exclusive monopoly of public worship. And yet among the lower orders of the clergy were to be found many republicans; but of the liberty demanded by these, religious liberty did not form a part. The liberal-minded abbés might declaim against the Inquisition, and bestow on it such epithets as cannibal and tiger-like, but they were all opposed to toleration. The revolutionary abbé, Fauchet — he who, after the capture of the Bastille, blessed the tricoloured uniforms of the citizen soldiers, and made of the tricolour the national flag—now jeered at the idea of toleration, and prophesied general and complete demoralisation as its only possible result. He went so far as to maintain that those who belonged to no church ought not to have the right to marry, "since one could not consider such persons bound by their word."

When the Estates met as the National Assembly, the clergy were soon compelled to make concessions; but even when the feeling against them found expression, it always in the end assumed the mildest, most deferential form. When, for example, in February 1790, incensed by Garat's declaring consecration to the priesthood to be civic suicide, a number of priests, amongst them Abbé Maury and the Bishops of Nancy and Clermont, started up, accused Garat of blasphemy, and moved that the Catholic religion should be proclaimed as the national religion, the motion was rejected, but in such a manner as clearly evinced the timidity and hesitation of

its opponents. It would, they declared, be an insult to religion, and to the feelings of the whole Assembly, to act as if there could be any doubt in such a matter. Men did not yet dare to say what they thought; and so an Assembly, the majority of which were free-thinkers, took part in church processions and attended Catholic public worship. Only two months later the motion that Catholicism should be proclaimed the state religion was again brought forward, this time after Maury's angry tirade against the proposal to secularise the property of the church. The proposer of the motion on this occasion was a priest, Dom Gerle, who afterwards, as a Jacobin, did his utmost to blot out the remembrance of his first public appearance. Mirabeau answered with a reference to a window in the Louvre which he could see from the place where he stood; "the very window," he shouted, "from which a French autocrat, who combined secular aims with the spiritual aims of religion, fired the shot which gave the signal for the massacre of St. Bartholomew." But once again the Assembly avoided the settling of the question by declaring that the majesty of religion and the reverence due to it forbade their making it the subject of debate. The Left with one accord refrained from voting and a protest was signed by 297 members, of whom 144 were ecclesiastics. Vacillation and self-contradiction were the order of the day.

The aristocracy, who a hundred years before had joyfully acclaimed Louis XIV.'s revocation of the Edict of Nantes, had been influenced to such an extent by the literature of the eighteenth century that, in their capacity as an Estate, they in a genuinely Voltairean spirit expressed themselves in favour of universal toleration; but they at the same time gave hesitating expression to the opinion that the Catholic church ought to be the national church. The Third Estate, the citizens, a considerable proportion of whom were Jansenists, and consequently in reality less liberal-minded, had expressed itself in a similarly evasive manner. But once the National Assembly was constituted, there was no longer any real uncertainty. As we all know, one of the first acts

of that Assembly was the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and liberty of thought and speech in matters of religion was specified as one of these rights. Article 10 of the Declaration runs as follows: "No one may be harassed on account of his opinions, not even of his religious opinions, provided his expression of the same be not subversive of lawful order." The Pope replied by declaring this liberty to be "an unnatural and foolish right, subversive of reason" (*sic*). This was a sufficient indication of the relative positions of the two camps.

When toleration becomes the subject of debate in the Constituent Assembly we perceive the direction things are taking. One of the clauses in the first draught of the Declaration of the Rights of Man ran thus: "Public worship being a matter of public import, it is the prerogative of society to control it, to permit the rites of one church and forbid those of another." Upon this clause Mirabeau made a violent attack.

"It is not toleration that I champion," he said. "In the matter of religion, unrestricted liberty is in my eyes such a sacred right that the employment of the word toleration to express it savours to me of tyranny; for the very existence of an authority which has the power to tolerate, and, consequently, the power not to do so, is an infringement on freedom of thought." In a subsequent debate he went still farther. "A ruling religion has been spoken of. What is meant in this case by 'ruling'? I do not understand the word, and must request a definition of it. Does it mean a religion which suppresses other religions? Has not the Assembly interdicted the word suppression? Or does it mean the religion of the sovereign? The sovereign has not the right to rule over men's consciences or to direct their opinions. Or does it apply to the religion of the majority? Religion is a matter of opinion. This or that religion is the outcome of this or that opinion. An opinion is not formed by counting votes. Thought is a man's own, is independent, and cannot be restricted."

It is evident that men were beginning to have the courage of their opinions in religious matters.

I adduce another example of the rapidity with which, both in the Assembly and in society in general, they were advancing from a timid first apprehension to certainty of the great spiritual revolution which was taking place.

In October 1789 there stood at the bar of the National Assembly a deputation of curiously dressed men with oriental features. They were Jews from Alsace and Lorraine, who had been deputed by their fellow-believers to appeal for mercy.

"Most noble Assembly," they said, "we come in the name of the Eternal, who is the source of all justice and truth, in the name of God, who has given to all men the same rights and the same duties, in the name of humanity, which has been outraged for centuries by the infamous treatment to which the unfortunate descendants of the oldest of nations have been subjected in almost every country, to beseech you humbly to take our unhappy fate into consideration. Those Jews who are everywhere persecuted, everywhere humiliated, and yet are always submissive, never rebellious; those Jews who are despised and harassed by all nations, whereas they ought to be pitied and tolerated, cast themselves at your feet, and venture to hope that, even in the midst of the important tasks which engross you, you will not neglect and despise their complaint, but will listen compassionately to the timid protests which they venture to offer from the depth of degradation in which they are sunk. . . . May an improvement in our position, which we have hitherto desired in vain, and which we now tearfully implore, be your work, your benefaction!"

Clermont-Tonnerre warmly supported this petition. He was opposed by the audacious and callous Abbé Maury, who argued thus: "It is absurd to talk in our days of persecution and intolerance! The Jews are our brothers. But to make the Jews citizens would be equivalent to permitting Englishmen or Danes to become Frenchmen without any process of naturalisation, without ceasing to be Englishmen or Danes." He also dwelt upon the usurious proclivities of the Jews and the other vices attributed to them: "Not a man amongst them has ennobled his hands by guiding a plough or cultivating a plot of ground."

Considering that Jews were strictly prohibited by law from acquiring even the smallest piece of land, and that their position was such that when they entered a town they were liable to the same duty as was imposed on pigs, Maury's argument was easy of refutation. But hatred of the Jews was still so strong that no one contradicted him. It was feared that, if civic rights were conferred on the Jews, they would turn the whole of Alsace into a Jewish colony.

There was a general feeling of embarrassment. Only one member of the Assembly, a man who as yet had attracted no notice, Maximilien Robespierre, spoke in favour of the motion for granting the Jews equality. He declared their vices to be the consequence of the degraded position in which they had been kept.

But he was alone in supporting a measure which, significantly enough, classed Protestants, actors, and Jews together. The human rights of the Protestants and the actors were acknowledged, but, as Mirabeau recognised the impossibility of passing the clause of the motion which concerned the Jews, he adjourned the debate on this clause indefinitely. Two years passed. In 1791 the Jews once more appealed. But in what a changed tone! The humble prayer of the slave had become the peremptory demand of the man. The conclusion of the appeal runs as follows:—

"If there were one religion which incapacitated its followers from being citizens, whilst the followers of all other religions made good citizens, then these other religions would be the ruling religions; but there is no ruling religion, since all have equal rights. If the Jews are refused civic rights because they are Jews, they are punished for belonging by birth to a certain religion. In this case there is no religious liberty, seeing that loss of civic rights accompanies the liberty. This much is certain—in advancing men to religious liberty, the intention was that they should simultaneously be advanced to civic liberty; there is no half liberty, just as there is no half justice."

Two years spent in the atmosphere of the Revolution

had given to these pariahs not only self-esteem but pride. This time the measure was passed without debate.

In the Constituent Assembly the animosity towards positive religion and its priests with which the "philosophers" had inoculated their age did not find vent in words; as yet it only expressed itself in deeds. All church property was proclaimed to be state property. Voltaire had impressed upon his disciples that it was their mission "to annihilate the infamous thing" (*écraser l'infame*). In the decisions of the Assembly faithful Catholics saw an attempt to carry out this injunction. It seemed to them as if all the powers of hell had been let loose upon the church of Christ, as if "the philosophers were bent upon exterminating the Christian religion, not only in France, but throughout Europe, nay, throughout the whole world." (*Conjuration contre la religion catholique et les souverains*, 1792.) In order to attain this result the "philosophers" had addressed themselves to the sovereigns of the great countries, to Frederick of Prussia, Catherine of Russia, and others; but it was from the French middle class that the blow came.

The priests, who, as the saying goes, have found what Archimedes sought, a fulcrum in another world from which to move this one, now began to stir up the spirit of fanaticism in the provinces. In the town of Arras a picture of the crucifixion was paraded in the streets, in which Maury and the royalists were represented standing on the right side of the cross, and the revolutionists on the left side, below the unrepentant thief. At Nîmes there was a regular riot when the news came that a Protestant, Saint-Étienne, had been elected President of the National Assembly.

The new ordering of the church's affairs was brought about by a coalition of the Voltairean and Jansenist members of the Assembly. The Jansenists had a religious hatred of earthly greatness, and, as fatalists, unquestioningly accepted the existence of human misery. Therefore it displeased them to see the church rich, and they took no account of the manner in which the poor benefited by its wealth. Moreover, the scandalous lives led by many of the high-placed ecclesiastics aroused their moral indignation. Every

one, for instance, knew that Bishop Jarante's mistress, Mademoiselle Guimard, distributed ecclesiastical promotion behind the scenes of the opera, that the Archbishop of Narbonne had a regular harem in one of his abbeys, and that the monks of the Abbey of Granselve had quarters for their ladies in a neighbouring village, where the tables were regularly spread for nightly revels.

If the revolutionists had been content with secularising church property, they could not well have been convicted of attacking religion. But they interfered in the church's internal arrangements and discipline, and even altered its ritual; and its dignitaries naturally proclaimed that the foundations of religion were shaken. Therefore the ordinary priest hardly ever dared take the oath of allegiance to the constitution. The small yearly payment received from the state by those who did so was likened to Judas Iscariot's blood-money, although in times past it had been considered just that bishops should own palaces and pleasure-grounds, and have luxuries of every kind at their disposal, while the lower orders of the clergy were positively starving.

As a result of the new order of things many riotous and many comic scenes were witnessed in the provinces. In one of Camille Desmoulins' newspaper articles we find an amusing description of the compulsory parting between a village curé and his charge. Coming out at the church door one Sunday after mass, Monsieur le Curé is surprised by the sight of a coach loaded with all his belongings. On the top sits Javotte, his housekeeper, to whom the schoolmaster, with tears in his eyes, is saying farewell. The curé is handed into the carriage amidst cries of: "Good-bye, good-bye, your Reverence!" and off he has to go, though he rages and storms as long as his church steeple is in sight. In other places, however, the priest was forced to take the oath with the bayonet at his breast; and in one instance a recalcitrant was shot dead in his pulpit. But if dissident priests were occasionally maltreated, the treatment meted out by these priests to their opponents was infinitely worse. They taught the peasants that the new constitution, which did not in reality interfere with religion at all, was a work

of the devil. They impressed upon their congregations that it was a mortal sin to take the sacrament from the hands of a priest who had sworn allegiance to the government, that the children of parents who had been married by such priests were illegitimate, nay, that the curse of God rested on them. One priest who had taken the oath was stoned in his church, another was hanged from the chancel lamp. The churches which had been closed by order of the National Assembly were broken open again. In certain departments murderous bands of devotees, led by priests, marched about armed with guns and spears. The situation was worst in Brittany. When the Breton peasant who had gone many miles to hear mass said by a true, *i.e.* non-juring priest, on his return met a dozen or so of his neighbours coming out of his own church, where they had been comfortably attending the ministrations of the new government curé, he was so infuriated that he felt justified in committing any of the outrages to which the church incited him.

By the time the Legislative Assembly met, there were no longer any Estates. The nobles had emigrated, and the exiled ecclesiastical dignitaries were imploring assistance at foreign courts. The lower ranks of the clergy, inspired by anti-revolutionary fanaticism, were inflaming the ignorant multitude. The debates now held in the Assembly were very different in tone from those of the old days. Now the standing grievance against religion was the naïvely formulated one that it did not harmonise with the constitution, and that against the clergy, that their one aim was to recover their property. The lies and violence of the priests had stirred up a feeling of great bitterness against them. A few conciliatory voices were heard, such as that of André Chénier, who maintained that the priests did not trouble the state when the state did not interfere with them, or Talleyrand, who insisted that, as no form of religion was prescribed by law, neither should any be prohibited by law; but Voltairean indignation was long the order of the day.

These were the halcyon days of the Girondists, and the

Girondists were the practical expression of the ideas of Voltaire.

In a public declaration drawn up by their famous leader, Vergniaud, we read: "The rebellious priests are preparing a revolt against the constitution; these insolent myrmidons of absolutism are supplicating all the sovereigns of Europe for money and soldiers wherewith to reconquer the sceptre of France." Roland, as Minister of the Interior, said: "Mutinous and hypocritical priests, concealing their plans and their passions under the sacred veil of religion, do not hesitate to excite fanaticism and to arm their misguided fellow-citizens with the sword of intolerance." When the proposal to banish the priests was under discussion, Vergniaud spoke, half jestingly, half seriously, of the iniquity of bringing evil upon other countries by sending them such a gift. "Generally speaking," he maintained, "nothing can be more immoral than that one country should send into another the criminals of whom it desires to be rid." But he comforts himself with the idea that in Italy they will be received as saints, and that "in this gift of living saints which we are sending him, the Pope will recognise a humble attempt to express our gratitude for all the arms, legs, and other relics of dead saints with which he has favoured our pious credulity during the centuries gone by."

"Yes," cries Isnard, the future President of the Convention, "let us send these plague-stricken creatures to the hospitals of Italy." And he adds that when a priest is depraved, he is never partly, but always wholly depraved, that to forgive crimes is the same as to commit them, that an end must be put to the existing state of matters, and that the enemies of the Revolution are themselves compelling the Revolution to crush them. From his lips issue for the first time the terrible words which were to be echoed and re-echoed times without number in days to come: "There is no need of proofs." That is to say, all priests accused were at once to be banished.

And when the fear was expressed that such proceedings would result in civil war, the noted Girondist, Guadet, a disciple of Holbach, reassured the Assembly with a speech con-

taining the following assertion: "Every one knows that a priest is as cowardly as he is covetous, that he wields no weapons but those of superstition, and that, having fought nowhere but in the theological prize-ring, he is a nonentity on the field of battle." It was soon seen how mistaken, in this matter at least, Guadet and his sympathisers were, and what bold, enthusiastic leaders the priests made in the sanguinary civil war which ensued.

Things reached such a pitch that speakers actually began to excuse themselves when they were obliged to address the Assembly on church matters. François de Nantes (as spokesman of a committee, be it noted) declares: "Our one consolation in being obliged to take up your time with the discussion of church matters is the hope that the measures you will take will prevent the necessity of your ever hearing of them again." His whole speech is a tissue of audacities.

These sentiments were shared by high and low. One of Louis XVI.'s ministers, the insolent, high-handed Cahier de Gerville, said one day, on leaving the council chamber, to his colleague Molleville, who noted down the expression in his Memoirs: "I wish I had these damned vermin, the clergy of all lands, between my fingers, that I might squeeze them all to death at once." But the spirit of the Revolution found temperate, dignified expression in a letter from the Republic to the Pope, which a woman had been commissioned to write. It is addressed to "The Prince-Bishop in Rome." In the name of the Republic Madame Roland writes: "High-priest of the Roman church, sovereign of a state which is slipping out of your hands, know that the only possible way in which you can preserve state and church is by making a disinterested confession and proclamation of those gospel principles which breathe a spirit of the purest democracy, the tenderest humanity, and the most perfect equality — principles with which Christ's representatives have adorned themselves only for the purpose of supporting and increasing a sovereign power which is now falling to pieces from decrepitude. The age of ignorance is past."

But such language as this is quite out of keeping with what was generally spoken and written. The period of

calm conviction was at an end, that of unbridled passions had begun. The passions followed in the track of the convictions. Hatred of Catholicism reached its climax; it broke out in one great flame all over France. Those were the golden days of the Clubs.

The Cordelier Club held its meetings in the chapel of a monastery. All the paintings, tapestries, and carvings were torn down; nothing but the skeleton of the church remained. The president's seat was in the chancel, where the rain blew in through the broken panes of the east window. His table was composed of joiners' benches; on it lay a row of red caps, and whoever wished to speak had to put on one of these. Behind him was a statue of Liberty with broken instruments of torture in her hands. Planks, fragments of stalls, of church benches, or of shattered images provided seats for a dirty, wild audience in ragged *carmagnoles* (as their jackets were called), shouldering spears, or sitting with their bare arms crossed. The orators spoke boldly and to the point; everything was called by its plainest name; an indecent word or audacious gesture roused applause. They were often interrupted by opponents, and at times by the screeching of small owls, which had been driven from their homes under the monastery roof, and now flew in and out through the broken windows seeking food. These were not to be silenced by the chairman's bell; they were sometimes shot, and fell fluttering and bleeding among the crowd. Among the speakers were Danton, Marat, and Camille Desmoulins—the amiable, witty Camille, whose moderation brought upon him the charge of hypocrisy, and who even before the tribunal of the Revolution spoke of the *sans-culotte*, Jesus. Camille had private reasons for his hatred of the priests. When, in December 1790, he wished to marry his beloved Lucile, without doubt one of the purest and most beautiful of the female characters of the Revolution, no priest would perform the ceremony because he had written in a newspaper article that the religion of Mahomet was as intelligible as the religion of Jesus. He was obliged to recant this assertion and to go to confession before he could be married.

But now he made amends. In his newspaper, *Le vieux Cordelier*, he wrote: "The whole subject of priests and of religions is disposed of when it has been said that they resemble each other in all being equally absurd, and when it has been instanced that the Tatars eat the excrement of the Grand Lama as the greatest delicacy. There is no fool too foolish to be honoured as Jupiter's equal. The Mongolians worship a cow, which is the object of as many genuflexions as the god Apis. . . . We have not the right to be aggravated by such follies, we who in our simplicity have so long allowed ourselves to be persuaded that it is possible to swallow a god as one swallows an oyster." An influential paper which had a great circulation among the Cordeliers was Loustalot's *Les Révolutions de Paris*. One of its numbers, published during Lent 1792, contained the following tirade, apropos of the shows at the fair: "In the days when there was a ruling religion in France, the tonsured jugglers allowed no competition during Holy Week. They alone might give performances. Now there is free competition. When the ordinary conjurer shows himself upon his stage he is attired in a cloak and strange headgear, by which he is distinguished from the surrounding crowd; but as soon as the performance is over he takes off his costume. The priest wears his all day long, and performs his part off as well as on the stage. . . . When will they blush to play the rôle of the harlequins of humanity?" Henceforward the revolutionary nickname of the priests is "theophagi." In the month of April the same newspaper contains an article in which it is proposed to apply to priests the regulations instituted by Johanna of Naples for the control of women of ill-fame. "They ought to be shut up in a house where they can preach and pray as much as they choose for those who seek them there, but should be prohibited from going abroad, so that they may not infect the population." The wine of Voltaire has turned into vinegar, into poison.

A rival club of a very different type from the Cordeliers' was the Jacobins'. Its intellectual tendency was more serious and more pedantic. Its patron was Rousseau, as

its rival's was Voltaire. The original programme of the Jacobins—love of equality, hatred of all established inequality—was derived purely from Rousseau ; with it they managed to combine ambition, a cold, calculating, revolutionary spirit of persecution, and, underlying everything else, devotion to rule, that is to say, to the regulation of society according to Rousseau's principles.

To the student who observes historic phenomena from the literary point of view, nothing in the history of the Revolution is more striking than the distinct manner in which all its men of action and of words acknowledge the literature of the eighteenth century to be the mainspring of their actions and utterances. They seem to seek no other honour than that of transforming ready-made principles into action. At Mirabeau's grave it was told to his honour that he had said of the philosophers : "They have produced light ; I will produce movement." And there is scarcely a paragraph in the *Contrat Social* which did not, during the course of the Revolution, reappear either in a law, or a public declaration, or a newspaper article, or a speech in the National Assembly, or in the very constitution of the Republic itself.

The most important of its theories—that power emanates from the people, that law is the expression of their will—is to be found literally reproduced in the Declaration of the Rights of Man. As soon as the idea of association occurs to the Jacobins they instantaneously trace it back to Rousseau, and employ all his phraseology. Abbé Fauchet writes, in an article in *La Bouche de Fer :* "Great Rousseau, of the candid mind and feeling heart ! thou art one of the first to have understood the eternal laws of equity. Yes ; every man has a right to the earth, has a right of property in what he requires for his support." And he goes on to maintain that the social contract is a contract between the man and his country. Saint-Just expresses himself in almost the same words in his speech demanding the death of Louis XVI. : "The social contract is a contract which the citizens conclude with one another, and not a contract with the government. Men have no responsibility in the matter of a

contract into which they have not entered." But it is Robespierre who, as leader of the Jacobins, gives typical expression to their devotion to the principles of Rousseau. He was the first enemy of the Girondist rationalism ; hence we find him, at the time when this rationalism was most distinctly proving its destructive tendency, declaring in a charge to the Jacobins that the Revolution is under the direction of God, is in fact His work. He felt impelled to give his revolutionary sentimentality this affected expression, which implied its relationship with what was called "natural religion."

It was not this feeling, but the spirit of contemptuous indignation awakened by Voltaire, which, towards the middle of the year 1792, became the dominant feeling in the Legislative Assembly and in France. In August the edict was passed which condemned all refractory priests to banishment to one of the colonies. Arrests of such priests took place every day. Then came the September slaughter. The imprisoned priests were the first to fall. Abbé Baruel writes : "These executioners did not all belong to the dregs of the people. A man shouted to the priests who were being murdered : 'Scoundrels, murderers, monsters, contemptible hypocrites ! the day of vengeance has come at last. No longer shall you delude the people with your masses, your scrap of bread upon the altar !'" The fortitude displayed by most of the priests is worthy of all admiration. In the prison of the Carmelite Convent, 172 of them unhesitatingly elected to be shot rather than take the oath of allegiance to the constitution. It is touching to read the description of the composure of those who were locked into the church : "From time to time we sent some of our comrades up to the window in the tower, to look in what posture the unfortunate men who were being sacrificed in the courtyard were meeting their fate, so that we might know how to conduct ourselves when our turn came. They told us that those who stretched out their arms suffered longest, because the sword-blows slackened before they reached the head" (Jourgniac de Saint-Méard.) In all, 1480 human beings were butchered. The number is unques-

tionably an appalling one; but it is to be noted, as not without interest, that, according to Michelet's calculation, the number of men (and women) executed between the beginning and the end of the Revolution does not amount to a fortieth part of the number killed in the battle of the Moskwa alone.

The hatred which had found such ferocious expression in the Days of September had not cooled down when the Convention assembled. Let us see what the member of Convention writes, reads, and says on the subject of priests and religion. One of them, Lequinio by name, presents his colleagues with a book which he has written and dedicated to the Pope. Its title is *Les Préjugés Détruits*. In it we read: "Religion is a political chain invented for the purpose of fettering men; its only use has been to ensure the pleasures of a few individuals by holding all the others in check." The tirades against the priests in this book surpass in violence and indecency any yet published. Amongst its mildest affirmations concerning them is one perpetually made at this time, with all manner of variations: "When they are honest, they are stupid or mad; as a rule they are audacious impostors, veritable assassins of the human race." We must go to Kierkegaard's *Öieblikket* (The Moment) to find outbursts corresponding to this. Such is the literature of the day. And Lequinio is not to be regarded as an exception, though he carried his war with prejudice to the extent of inviting the public executioner to dine with him and his family for the purpose of overcoming the prejudice against that official. In *Les Révolutions de Paris*, the newspaper which the member of Convention perused before he went forth to take his part in the debates of the day, he read one morning in December 1792, apropos of the celebration of the midnight mass in Paris: "There is no particular harm in holding exhibitions of dancing marionettes or conjurers' tricks in the public streets in the light of day; it is quite permissible that children and nurses should be amused. But to meet in dark assembly halls at night for the purpose of singing hymns, lighting tapers, and burning incense in honour of an illegitimate child and an unfaithful wife is a scandal, an offence

against public morality, which demands the attention of the police and strict repressive measures." [1] Previously quoted utterances have been aglow with exasperation, hatred, and scorn ; but as yet they have not been ribald. They were the revengeful cries of that human reason which had been so long fettered and tortured. This language is scurrilous. And there is another change. Those who have hitherto been oppressed are betraying a marked inclination in their turn to play the part of oppressors.

Action followed swiftly upon resolve. "They proceeded," writes Mercier in *Le nouveau Paris*, "to the destruction of everything connected with the old worship, not with the frenzy of zealotry, but with an ironical contempt and uncontrolled mirth which could not but astound the onlooker." The churches were positively ravaged. One troop of its emissaries communicated to the Convention that they had "permitted 'brown Mary' (a certain miracle-working image) to retire, after all the hard work she had had in fooling the world for 1800 years." The altars were plundered for the benefit of the treasury of the Republic. Here is a fragment of a report: "There are no longer any priests in the Department of Nièvre. The altars have been despoiled of the piles of gold which ministered to priestly vanity. Thirty millions worth of valuable articles will be sent to Paris. Two carts laden with crucifixes, gold croziers, and two millions in gold coin, have already arrived at the Mint. Three times as much will immediately follow."

Sometimes the carts stopped at the door of the assembly hall of the Convention, and sacks full of gold and silver were piled up in the hall itself.

Another report is in the ironical style. "I have been unjustly accused of an onslaught on religion. The fact is that I asked most politely before I acted, and three or four hundred saints begged for permission to go to the Mint.

[1] Louis Blanc (in his *Histoire de la Révolution*, viii. 35) has misunderstood this article. He takes the unfaithful wife and illegitimate son to mean Marie Antoinette and the Dauphin. A note in the original text has escaped his observation ; it is to the effect that the "founders of the three greatest religions were bastards."

The language employed on the occasion was something in this style: 'Ye who have been the tools of fanaticism, ye saints and holy ones of every description, show now that ye are patriots, and help your country by marching to the Mint!'"

In a third report the delegates congratulate themselves on the result of their "philosophic mission" in the Department of Gers. "Public feeling was ripe, and it was decided that the abolition of fanaticism should be solemnly celebrated on the last day of the third Decade. The whole population assembled in a rustic spot to hold the festival of brotherhood. After a Spartan meal they hurried into the town, tore down all the emblems of fanaticism, and trampled them under foot. A scavenger's cart drove up, bringing two miracle-working virgins and a variety of crucifixes and images of saints, to which, but a short time before, superstition had offered incense. All this ridiculous rubbish was piled upon a bonfire, on which already lay a collection of patents of nobility, and burned amidst the rejoicings of an enormous crowd. Round this philosophic pyre on which so many delusions were consumed the *carmagnole* was danced all night."

In a fourth report we read: "Sixty-four refractory priests were living in a house belonging to the people. I ordered them to be marched through the town to prison. The new kind of monster, which had not as yet been exhibited to the gaze of the public, produced an excellent effect. Shouts of 'Vive la République!' rose from the crowd that surrounded the herd. Have the goodness to let me know what I am to do with the five dozen animals whom I have held up to the ridicule of the multitude. I gave them actors as an escort."

The debates which preceded the proclamation of religious liberty on the 3rd Ventôse of the year III. were all in this same tone. However divided the Convention might be upon other questions, upon this there was absolute unanimity. Marked as is the difference in the nation's frame of mind during, and after, the Reign of Terror, there is no difference in its attitude towards Catholicism. When, as one result of the proclamation of religious liberty, a few

churches had been reopened, the fact was announced by the weekly paper *Le Décade Philosophique*, under the heading "Theatres," in the following terms: "On the 18th and 25th of this month a comedy was played in several parts of Paris. The chief character, in an absurd costume, performed a variety of foolish antics, at which the spectators did not laugh. As we are not in the habit of criticising revived plays when they are neither useful nor instructive, we shall take no further notice of this one."

Mirabeau had said that men's first aim must be "to decatholicise" France. To all appearance this was being done. One Commune after another petitioned to be allowed to change its name, which was almost always that of some saint. Saint-Denis, for instance (whose headless patron never existed), was renamed Franciade. Most of the provinces followed the example of Paris. Nothing that could remind men of the "kingdom by the grace of God" was spared. In 1793 a venerable, white-bearded Alsatian, a member of the Committee of Public Safety, Ruhl by name, managed to get possession of the sacred, miracle-working ampulla containing the anointing oil which a dove had brought down from heaven on the occasion of the coronation of Clovis. Followed by a vast crowd, he bore it in triumph to the great square of Reims, where the magistrates and other public officials had already assembled round the statue of Louis XV. Here he delivered an oration against tyranny and tyrants, and wound up by throwing the sacred vessel at the head of Louis le Bien-aimé with such violence that it broke into a hundred pieces, and the sacred oil trickled once again down the cheeks of the Lord's Anointed.

Events such as these, and language such as the above quoted, show plainly enough how determinedly the Revolution was attacking the principle of authority. It was highly significant that patents of nobility were burned in the same bonfire with the images of the saints, and that disbelief in the sacred ampulla led to the flouting of royalty. From the moment when the authority of religion was overthrown, the magic power of authority in every domain was gone.

It was supplanted by the watchword: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. But this watchword contained at least two fundamental principles instead of one. Liberty as a fundamental principle may be regarded as emanating from Voltaire, fraternity from Rousseau. And equality and liberty did not combine well. When, not long before the Revolution, Saint-Martin, the mystic, proclaimed his mysterious doctrine of the Holy Trinity (Ternaire)—liberty, equality, and fraternity, which always had been, and always should be—he did not foresee the possibility of disunion, of conflict, between these principles. Voltaire says somewhere: "It was a wise provision that made of the Trinity one God; if there had been three they would have come to blows." In 1793 Saint-Martin's trinity revealed the contradictions which lay latent in it.

In the month of April the new Declaration of the Rights of Man which Robespierre had drawn up and persuaded the Jacobins to accept as their programme was published, and in the same month, whilst the violent dispute between Robespierre and Vergniaud was going on, there emanated from the opposite camp the plan of a constitution, evolved by Condorcet, Barrère, Thomas Paine, Pétion, Barbaroux, Sièyes, and others, and drawn up by Condorcet.

If we place these two documents side by side, we have before us in embryo the two ideas which in the future were to struggle for the mastery, namely, the idea of liberalism and the idea of socialism, the former derived from Voltaire, the latter from Rousseau. As the two programmes deal point by point with the same subjects, the difference strikes us here as it does nowhere else.

In the first years of the Revolution there had been no mention of socialism. Men aimed at freeing capital from unjust burdens, not at limiting its power. This is clearly shown by the fact that the first proof which the victorious bourgeoisie gave of their authority after the storming of the Bastille was the publication of a decree that the printers were to be held responsible for every book or pamphlet published by writers without known means of subsistence (*sans existence connue*). This regulation was published on the

24th of July 1789, exactly ten days after the capture of the Bastille. The bourgeoisie took care, as soon as they had mounted themselves, to draw the ladder up after them. Their first act, when they had won their own place by the aid of the pen, was to take the pen out of the hand of the classes below them.

The Convention, nourished on the ideas of Rousseau and Mably, comprehended that inequality within the citizen society was the worst enemy of political equality, and dreamed of producing equality by giving property to all. Condorcet wished to devote the funds at the disposal of the state, not to the abolishment of private property, but to the equalisation of any excessive disproportion in the distribution of worldly possessions. Right of succession was to be abolished, the means of education were to be made accessible to all, &c., &c. It was not till the owners of property began, after the fall of Robespierre, to resist the claims of those who owned nothing, that the attack on property as such was made. Babeuf's communistic conspiracy followed. The conspiracy was betrayed and defeated, drowned in the blood of the conspirators without a voice being raised in defence of the ideas which had inspired it. Socialism did no more than put out feelers at the time of the Revolution.

Whilst the Girondists' Declaration of the Rights of Man ensures first and foremost the rights of the individual —freedom of conscience and of thought (*les franchises de la pensée* was the expression in those days), the inviolability of the home, equality in sight of the law, the proportioning of punishment to crime—the Jacobins in every matter insist upon the responsibility of human beings for each other and the duty entailed by brotherhood.

The Girondists laid down the principle of non-interference. The Jacobins taught: The men of all countries are brothers, and the different nations ought to help each other to the best of their ability, like citizens of the same state. The nation which oppresses another nation declares itself the enemy of all. Those who make war upon any one nation in order to arrest the progress of liberty and abolish the

rights of humanity ought to be assailed by all the others, not as ordinary enemies, but as insurrectionary murderers and robbers.

The Girondists opposed every tyranny in human shape, but they seldom tried to protect from the tyranny of circumstances. Their work was for the most part of a negative nature. The Jacobins perceived more clearly the uselessness of bestowing on the sick the right to be cured without curing them, the mockery in solemnly conferring on the lame the right to walk. Yet there was no essential difference between them. Condorcet the Girondist felt as strongly as any Jacobin that free competition was a lie when in the race one man was mounted on an excellent horse while the other had to run barefoot.

It was the feeling of duty to society (as defined by Rousseau) which led to Robespierre's significant intervention in the war between the Revolution and positive religion. Once the Revolution had broken into the churches axe in hand, it seemed as if the movement were irresistible. Men mounted on the frailest of scaffolding to scrape from the ceilings of churches portraits of popes concealed by century-old spiders' webs. Images of saints were torn from their niches, and fanaticism destroyed some of the finest works of Gothic art; the emissaries of the Revolution descended even into the vaults, and flashed their lanterns in the pale faces of the dead; fragments of broken-up altars were piled together "like shapeless stones in a quarry." The chairmen of the revolutionary committees wore velvet breeches made out of episcopal robes, and shirts cut out of choristers' surplices. In the end a few atheistic enthusiasts (Anacharsis Clootz, a man of German extraction, Chaumette, and Hébert) made their voices heard, and carried the mob with them in their iconoclastic fury.

Except on this occasion we hear as little of atheism during the Revolution as of socialism. Belief in God and immortality, the common creed of Voltaire and Rousseau, is the creed held unchanged by almost all the chosen leaders of the people. And this same belief pervades all the writings

of the period. Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* is a good example. Even such a recklessly disreputable poem as Parny's *Guerre des Dieux* inculcates the same doctrine. Camille Desmoulins writes in a letter: "Mon cher Manuel! Les rois sont mûrs, mais le bon Dieu ne l'est pas encore (notez que je dis *le bon Dieu* et non pas *Dieu*, ce qui est fort différent)." This is the standpoint of the age; its task was not to subject the conception of God to criticism, but to free it from the legendary encumbrances of the positive religions. The atheists in the National Assembly led the Revolution beyond its proper goal and instigated excesses which degraded it in the eyes of the contemporary generation.

Clootz succeeded in persuading a bishop, Gobel by name, to write a letter to the Convention, which began: "Citizens, representatives! I am a priest, that is to say, a quack. Hitherto I have been an honest quack; I have only deceived because I myself was deceived." It ended, of course, with the information that he had become converted to philosophy.

Chaumette, an enthusiast, who had procured the abolition of corporal punishment in educational institutions and of legally regulated prostitution, persuaded the Commune to consecrate the cathedral of Notre Dame to "the worship of Reason." Within the church was erected a temple with the inscription *À la Philosophie*, the porch of which was decorated with busts of the great philosophers. On the dedication day, when the door was thrown open, a young actress, Mademoiselle Candeille, representing Liberty, issued forth, and a hymn to Liberty, written by Marie-Joseph Chénier and set to music by Gossec, composer to the Republic, was sung in her honour. On another occasion Mademoiselle Maillard of the Opera, a stately and beautiful woman, chosen to represent the goddess of Reason, was carried shoulder-high out of the old cathedral in a chair decked with garlands of oak leaves and was escorted by trumpeters, a crowd of red-capped citizens, and a number of members of the Convention, to the assembly hall of that body, whose president solemnly impressed a kiss on her brow. But these ceremonies, innocent in themselves, were

degraded by the ribald manner in which they were imitated by the mob. Women of bad character had themselves carried in triumphal processions as goddesses of Reason. Wild revels were held in churches; the church of Saint-Eustache was actually turned into a tavern. The relics of Saint Geneviève were burned, and such a bonfire of wooden images of saints, prayer-books, and Old and New Testaments was lit on the Place de la Grève that the flames rose to the second stories of the houses.

Clootz was elected president of the Jacobin Club. Hereupon Robespierre, as a good disciple of Rousseau, and with his eye on Europe, prevailed on the Convention to issue a public declaration that the French people acknowledged the existence of the Supreme Being; and he moreover persuaded the Jacobins to present a petition to the Convention, praying that assembly to do all that was in its power to restore belief in God and in the immortality of the soul. He denounced the iconoclasts as fanatics of the Catholic type, and atheism as aristocratic. When, in May 1794, he mounted the tribune to urge the Convention to celebrate a festival in honour of the Supreme Being, he proceeded, after saying a few enthusiastic words in praise of Rousseau, to make a deliberate attack on Christianity. "All men's imaginings disappear in presence of the truth, and all follies succumb to reason. . . . What have the priests to do with God? The position of priests to morality is the same as that of quacks to the science of medicine." Assuming, in the manner of his century, that religions are the inventions of their priests, he says: "The priests have made of God a fire-ball, a bull, a tree, a man, a king. The Supreme Being's true priest is nature, his temple the universe, his worship virtue." He goes on to show that priests have everywhere supported tyranny: "It is you who have said to kings: Ye are the representatives of God on earth; it is from Him ye hold your authority! And the kings in their turn have said to you: In very truth ye are God's messengers; let us divide the incense and the spoils!"

The result of these endeavours was the Conven-

tion's proclamation to all the nations of the earth that it countenanced free worship of God, and that it censured "the excesses of philosophy as strongly as the crimes of fanaticism." One paragraph of this proclamation runs: "Your rulers will tell you that the French nation has banished all religions and has ordained the worship of certain men instead of the worship of the Deity; they represent us to you as an idolatrous and insane people. They lie. The French people and its representatives favour liberty of worship of every kind." It was decided to celebrate a certain number of religious festivals—the festivals of liberty, of equality, of humanity, one in honour of the great men who in their day had been liberators, &c., &c.

The first outcome of this decision was the famous festival in honour of the Supreme Being. There is something touchingly comic in the childishness of the whole proceeding. With a bouquet of flowers and ears of wheat in his hand, Robespierre, elected president for the day, led the assembled Convention through Paris to the Champ de Mars. On its march it was encircled by a tricoloured ribbon carried by children, youths, middle-aged and old men, decked according to their age with violets, myrtle, oak, or vine leaves. Every member of the Convention wore a tricoloured scarf and carried a bouquet of flowers, fruits, and ears of corn. When they had taken their places in the space reserved for them on the highest part of the plain, a ceremony was proceeded with, which, according to the testimony of eye-witnesses, was impressive, though somewhat theatrical. An invocation of the Most High was sung by thousands of voices. The young girls strewed flowers, the young men brandished their weapons and swore that they would save France and liberty. The rites concluded with a performance in the taste of the day. In a conspicuous position stood a group of monsters specially designed by the famous painter, David—impiety, selfishness, disunion, and ambition, evil things which were to be exterminated from the earth henceforth and for ever. Robespierre seized a torch and flung it at the monsters. As they had been drenched with turpentine they burned

up at once, and in their place there appeared an incombustible statue of Wisdom. A curious irony of fate willed it that this statue should be completely blackened by the flames and smoke.

The festival in honour of the Supreme Being was an ingenuous expression of the piety of the eighteenth century. Robespierre was perfectly right in lamenting that Rousseau had not lived to see that day ; it would have been a festival after his own heart. And so firmly were these religious ideas rooted in the minds of the legislators that they stood when Robespierre fell. The "citizen" religion instituted by the Convention was not of his evolving. Far from turning back after his death, men pressed eagerly onwards. The Republican calendar was introduced. As "the Christian era had been the era of lies, deception, and charlatanism," the Christian reckoning was abolished ; time was reckoned from 1792, the week was superseded by the decade, and it was proposed to give to the various saints' days the names of agricultural implements and useful domestic animals.

Ere long regular liturgies and catechisms of the new religion were published. In one such book (*Office des décadis en discours, hymnes et prières en usage dans les temples de la Raison*) we read :—

"Liberty, thou supreme happiness of man upon earth, hallowed be thy name by all nations throughout the world ! May thy joy-bringing kingdom come and put an end to the reign of tyrants ! May thy holy worship take the place of the worship of those miserable idols whose altars thou hast overthrown ! . . . I believe in a Supreme Being who has created men free and equal, who has formed them to love one another and not to hate one another, who desires to be honoured by the exhibition of virtue, not of fanaticism, and in whose eyes the noblest of worships is the worship of truth and reason. I believe in the approaching fall of all tyrants, in the regeneration of morality, the ever-increasing spread of all the virtues, and the eternal triumph of liberty."

Simultaneously, however, men confessed their faith in other and less innocent ways. The churches were dis-

mantled to serve the purposes of the new religion. Practical reasons made the abolition of Sunday a vital question; ere long suspicion attached to every one who observed it —and in those days it was dangerous to be suspected. The violent attempts made during the rule of the Convention to prevent the observance of Sunday constituted a new species of tyranny, which, although more excusable than the tyranny it superseded, was no less barbarous and unreasonable.

Even under the Directory, when the first symptoms of a reactionary movement in the lower ranks of society were already perceptible, there were, as we are told by a writer of the day, members of Assembly who had nervous attacks if they as much as heard the word "priest"; and the work of destruction was carried on with avidity. "Every man," says Laurent, "who had a drop of revolutionary blood in his veins laboured with feverish enthusiasm at the destruction of Christianity." In official reports the faithful Catholics are described as "weak-minded." A proclamation of the Directory relating to the elections of the year VI. declares that it is necessary to erase from the lists "the unhappy fanatics, who are blinded by credulity, and who might take it into their heads to throw themselves once more at the feet of the priests."

The priests had continued to be the most terrible enemies of the Revolution. The bloody war in La Vendée was to a great extent their work. The horrors perpetrated during this struggle recall those of the Middle Ages. One priest who had sworn allegiance to the constitution was stoned to death by yelling women, and another was torn to pieces, also by women. Before the Republican President, Joubert, was killed, his hands were sawn off. In one town the Royalists buried their revolutionary enemies alive; when the Republican troops arrived they saw arms sticking up out of the ground, the hands clenching the turf.

The revolutionists were soon compelled to acknowledge that their proceedings had had the opposite effect to what they had wished and expected. Significantly enough, the envoys sent to La Vendée were the first to advise complete

separation of church from state. In their opinion this was the only means of tranquillising men's minds and restoring the country to peace. As far back as the days of the Legislative Assembly it had been proposed by a priest that the state should cease to subsidise any religion. But men were too excited then to refrain from violent espousal of one side or the other. The revolutionists hoped, as they often said, "to put an end to all sectarianism" by the aid of universal education. They fondly imagined that the era of dogmas was past, that the time had come when, in the words of Jefferson, the American, the miraculous conception of Christ in the womb of a virgin was to be classed along with the miraculous conception of Minerva in the head of Jupiter. In a report drawn up under the Convention we read: "Soon men will only make acquaintance with these foolish dogmas, the offspring of fear and delusion, to despise them. Soon the religion of Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, and Cicero will be the religion of the world." And when, in her Memoirs, Madame Roland has occasion to use the word "catechism," she considers it necessary to explain it for the benefit of posterity. She writes: "So rapidly are things moving now that the readers of this passage will perhaps ask: What was that? I will tell them."

The men of the Revolution had failed to comprehend that the great body of the people, profoundly ignorant, and imbued with ideas and feelings which had been transmitted from generation to generation for centuries, were irresponsive to their appeals, terrified by their acts of violence, and prepared, from old habit, to give themselves over into the hands of the priests again, as soon as opportunity offered. In 1800, in a letter to Bonaparte, General Clarke writes: "Our religious revolution has been a failure. France has become Roman Catholic again. It would take thirty years' liberty of the press to destroy the spiritual power of the Bishop of Rome." He is mistaken only in his computation of thirty years. Three hundred would be more nearly the number required, and even this would only suffice if to liberty of the press were added good, free, and entirely secular education.

It was not the common people alone who had quietly remained faithful to the church. In the upper-class families in the provinces the mother, with her daughters, had generally remained Catholic, since the father, with the Frenchman's natural caution and distrust of free thought, almost invariably, whatever his private opinions might be, regarded religion as a beneficial restraint upon women. The ladies had always embroidered altar-cloths, patronised the priest, given him money for his poor parishioners, attended mass most regularly. Now the celebration of mass was forbidden. The industrious and phlegmatic French peasant, his wife, and his whole household had, until the Revolution came, been accustomed to look up to *Monsieur le curé* as a species of earthly providence, been accustomed to salute him reverently when he passed, and to ask his advice ; he had baptized the children, and from his hands they had received their first sacrament ; he had united Jacques to Fanchette in holy matrimony ; he had administered the last sacraments to the old mother. No one read in the peasant's house ; no one cultivated literature, or philosophy, or music. Every impulse of the soul that rose above the plough-share and the clods which it flung up took the direction of the church. Poor as it might be, it was a festal hall in comparison with the cottar's hovel—and it was a holy place ; they knelt in it. Now the church was closed. Any one who has seen the peasants of France or Italy pray, seen the touching devotion which shines from eyes as earnest and as clear as a dog's, can understand what it meant to such people that there was no longer to be mass or priest. And Sunday too ! The peasant is opposed to every change the utility of which is not at once apparent to him. Sunday to be done away with ! Had any one ever heard the like ? Could such an idea have occurred to any one except these gentlemen in Paris ? Sunday, which had been kept holy for more than a thousand years—possibly since the creation of the world ! God Himself had rested on the seventh day ; but now the week was to have ten days, and to be called *Décade*, a word which conveyed no meaning. Was God, too, to be done away with ?

Add to all this the effect upon the younger and as yet undepraved priests. Frayssinous, who, after the Restoration, became so famous as a Catholic vindicator of Christianity, tells how he himself and a friend, also a priest, continued to perform their sacred avocations during the Reign of Terror in spite of all the threats of banishment, and how, in order to prove and strengthen themselves, and familiarise themselves with the death which awaited them if they were discovered, they went in turn to watch the executions on the permanent scaffold of Rodez.

Think of young enthusiasts such as these, or the priests described in Lamartine's *Jocelyn*, meeting their flocks on Sunday mornings in underground caves, in cold, damp cellars, which might well call to mind the catacombs of the early Christians. The congregation talk of the trials of the church, comfort one another, hear a sermon, receive the holy sacrament, and go their way with tearful eyes and uplifted hearts. The great lady and the simple peasant woman have felt that they are members of one body, as they never felt it when the one occupied the best seat in church while the other sat on the bench at the door.

Even the confiscation of the property of the church turned out to be for the church's good. Many a priest who had been demoralised by good living suddenly found himself reduced to apostolic poverty. If deprivations only roused the wrath of many, they chastened others. The cause for which a man suffers becomes dear to him. The wavering, half-philosophic priest who (as we are told by Barante) was almost ashamed to confess his belief in the doctrines of Christianity, felt his self-esteem increase when the cause which he served was persecuted. In 1801 Bishop Lecoz writes: "The religion which our Saviour founded without the aid of wealth, He will maintain without its aid, which is unworthy of His acceptance. When he called His twelve apostles, to what did He call them? To the enjoyment of riches or of honour? No; to toil, to care, to suffering. If then we, the servants of Jesus Christ, now find ourselves almost in this apostolic condition, ought we to grumble? Nay, let us rather rejoice at this precious deprivation of

the world's goods; let us thank the Lord, who has restored things to that old condition for which the most pious of His children have never ceased to long."

As the feeling of horror and shame produced by the Reign of Terror, when it was past, turned the thoughts of many Frenchmen once more in the direction of monarchy and the royal house, so the cruel persecution of religion awoke ardent sympathy for the church and its priests.

In Belgium (now incorporated with France), where there had been wholesale banishment of the clergy, insurrections had broken out all over the country. To quell them it had been necessary to burn numbers of villages and kill several thousand peasants. In France there was now not only one Vendée; every province had its own. In 1800 the royalist and church party had the upper hand almost everywhere in the country communes of the twelve western departments; they had 40,000 men under arms. Even the men whose interests bound them most closely to the new order of things, the men who had acquired the confiscated property of the church, were not happy in their new possessions. The land of the new owner had formerly belonged to the priest, the hospital, or the school. These had been plundered, and he had become rich through their impoverishment. The women of his household, his wife, his mother, were uneasy and often depressed, and when he himself was ill he felt the stings of an evil conscience; he trusted that the priest would grant him absolution at the last moment, but was tormented by the fear that he might not. (Taine, *Le régime moderne*, i. 134, &c.)

All this was a good preparation for the rehabilitation of religion. And we must not forget the intellectual force, the valuable ally, which the church gained by suddenly, as it were, finding itself able to appropriate the fundamental principle of the Revolution, and in its name win new supporters. The whole situation was altered from the day when the church, hostile to liberty up to the last possible moment, finally, vanquished by necessity, inscribed liberty on its banner. Oppressed, and feeling the need of liberty for itself, it now spoke in the name of liberty, and that so

touchingly that all who heard the crocodile weep took it to be a defenceless creature. Liberal Catholicism—how the words jar!—came into being. The church wrested the best weapon of the Revolution out of its hands, and put it into those of her own adherents—only temporarily, of course, until she had reconquered her old power; then, alas for liberty! But in the meantime the Pope had suddenly become *liberal*—religious liberalism, they called it. When the order of the Jesuits was reconstructed, even the Jesuits declared that their desire was "good, true liberty."

How much honesty there was in this appeal to liberty was seen as soon as religion was in power again. When, in 1808, Napoleon demanded of the Pope that he should concede liberty of religion, the Pope replied: "Because such liberty is at variance with the law of the church, with the decrees of its councils, and with the Catholic religion, because, moreover, by reason of the terrible consequences it would entail, it is incompatible with the peace and happiness of nations, we have condemned it." Simple-minded Catholics, like Lamennais, who at a somewhat later period acted on the supposition that all this talk of liberty was intended to be taken literally, discovered how much it meant. But even after Lamennais had been disposed of by a papal bull in 1832, his disciple Montalembert, who renounced his master's theories and became the most vigorous champion of the church in the middle of this century, was permitted to go on preaching *liberal* Catholicism. It was not until 1873, when such Catholicism could no longer be turned to any possible use, that it was anathematised in one of the most virulent bulls on record. Only few of those who read the bull in the newspapers understood its full import.

The appeals in the name of liberty gained the church many supporters; and to the men of principle who, at the moment of the revulsion under the Consulate, were influenced by these appeals, and whose sympathy for the church was increased by the harsh treatment meted out to the Pope under the Empire, there were added on the restoration of the Bourbons the many whose religion is

always that of their masters, all the approvers of Holberg's fox's moral: "Have no scruples in religious matters; abide blindly by the prevailing belief!"

About the year 1800, however, though an occasional revolutionary excess was still not unheard of, France enjoyed complete religious liberty, guaranteed by law. To the persecution of priests under the Convention and the imperfect tolerance of the Directory had succeeded perfect legal security for all confessions; the priests had been relieved from the obnoxious oath, its place being taken by a simple promise to obey the law; and each priest was now supported by the voluntary contributions of his parishioners, the state abstaining from all interference. These contributions were naturally often small, and many a prelate looked back with longing to the flesh-pots of the old days, and to what Robespierre called the alliance between the sceptre and the censer. Bonaparte had the choice between fostering the germ of religious liberty and making a tool of religious tradition. He did not deliberate. The re-establishment of the church was an indispensable link in the chain of his policy.[1]

[1] Laurent, *Histoire du droit des gens*, tome xiv.; Carlyle, *History of the French Revolution*, i.–iii.; Louis Blanc, *Histoire de la révolution française*, i.–xii.; Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, i., ii.

II

THE CONCORDAT

ONE night in the month of October 1801 the gates of Paris were secretly opened to admit a closed carriage with a military escort. What was concealed in that carriage? Was it a criminal? Was it contraband ware? There sat in it an old priest, Caprara by name, the Pope's envoy to General Bonaparte; and the contraband article thus smuggled into Paris in the darkness was the Concordat, the compact with Rome which re-established the Christian religion in France. It was considered rash to allow a priest coming on such an errand to make his entrance in daylight; the First Consul, with his usual sagacity and forethought, had arranged that he should arrive at night. It was not violence that was feared, only laughter. "They dared not," says Thiers, "put such temptation in the way of the mirth-loving population of Paris."[1]

The same difficulty recurred in April 1802, when, after countless attempts to come to an agreement, during the course of which it often seemed as if the negotiations were on the point of being finally broken off, things were so far settled that Napoleon could accord an official reception to the Cardinal-Legate. Ecclesiastical etiquette prescribes that a gold crucifix shall be borne in front of a papal legate, and the Cardinal demanded that on his way to the reception at the Tuileries this should be done by a mounted officer in a red uniform. On this occasion also the Government, as Thiers tells us, was afraid of the effect of such a spectacle on the population of Paris. A compromise was come to; it was agreed to do with the crucifix what had been done with

[1] Thiers, *Histoire du consulat et de l'empire*, iii. 211, 342.

the Cardinal himself six months previously, namely, drive it in a closed carriage.

At last, a week later, on Easter Sunday, April 18, 1802 (28th Germinal of the year X.), a copy of the Concordat was posted up early in the morning in all the streets of Paris, and the First Consul, after signing the Peace of Amiens in honour of the day, proceeded to Notre Dame, to hear the great Te Deum sung in celebration of the reinstitution of Christian worship, or, to use the official expression, the reconciliation of the Republic with Heaven. Programmes of the ceremonies had been distributed. The First Consul was attended by a numerous and distinguished suite. He had himself intimated to the wives of all the high officials that they were expected to appear in full dress. They accompanied Madame Bonaparte; he himself was surrounded by his staff, all his generals, and all the most important civil functionaries. The carriages which had belonged to the old court were taken into use again on this occasion. Bonaparte drove to church in the old royal state-coach, and with all the pomp of royalty. Salvoes of artillery proclaimed to the world this resurrection of the church from the dead and this first attempt at the revival of royal power and royal splendour. The route of the procession from the Tuileries to Notre Dame was lined by troops of the First Army Corps. The Archbishop of Paris received the First Consul at the church door and offered him holy water. He was then conducted under a canopy to the seat reserved for him. The Senate, the Legislative Assembly, and the Tribune occupied the places at the two sides of the altar. The church was soon full of uniforms, beautiful dresses, and liveries. Liveries, which had disappeared during the Revolution, reappeared along with cassocks. Behind the First Consul stood his generals, in gala uniform, "rather obedient than convinced," as Thiers remarks. They did their best to show what was really the case, namely, that they were there against their will, and that the whole ceremony was in their eyes a contemptible farce. Their behaviour was characterised by those who differed from them as "unseemly." That of the First

Consul presiented a marked contrast. Attired in his red consul's uniform, he stood motionless, with a severe, inscrutable countenance, serious and cold, displaying neither the indifference of the unwilling spectators nor the devotion of the faithful. On the hilt of his sword glittered the famous Regent diamond, which he had had set there for the occasion, as a sign that the symbols of majesty which had hitherto belonged to the crown now belonged to the sword. His demeanour showed plainly enough that this act of his was not an act of faith, but of will, and that he was determined his will should prevail.

On the morning of the day on which this famous Te Deum was sung, the Government organ, *Le Moniteur,* published by Bonaparte's express order a review of a book, the second edition of which was dedicated to him as the restorer of the church. The book was Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme.* The review was written by Fontanes; it had appeared in the *Mercure* three days before, but was now, by Government orders, republished in the official organ. *Le Génie du Christianisme* was as much part of the programme of the day as the low-necked dresses and the liveries. The religious reaction in society and in literature may be dated almost from the same hour, from the same fête. In a letter from Joubert to Chateaubriand's friend, Madame de Beaumont, we come upon the remarkable words: "Our friend was created and brought into the world expressly for this occasion."

The planning and compassing of this same religious solemnity had cost Bonaparte an infinite amount of trouble. But of what avail was it that at every street corner men read that "the example of centuries, as well as reason, bade them appeal to the papal sovereign to reconcile opinions and customs"? Of what avail that the city was illuminated and a state concert given at the Tuileries in honour of the solemn occasion? The feeling inspired was dissatisfaction, a dissatisfaction as great as the joy inspired in its day by the festival in honour of the Supreme Being.

When Bonaparte, on his return from Notre Dame, turned in the Tuileries to one of his officers, General

Delmas, and asked his opinion of the grand religious ceremony, that officer replied: "It was an excellent Capuchin carnival play (*Capucinade*); there was only one thing wanting—the million of people who have given their lives to break down what you are building up again." And in these words Delmas expressed the general feeling of Napoleon's officers. In November 1801 the exasperation of the army at the idea of a reconciliation with the church had made itself distinctly felt; men who were on such intimate terms with Bonaparte as Lannes and Augereau had plainly expressed their annoyance at the prospect of having to show their uniforms in a church; and it was a common remark among the soldiers that the French flags had never won so many laurels as now, when they were no longer consecrated. When the generals received a direct order to appear at Notre Dame they sent Augereau (in vain, we know) as their spokesman to the Tuileries to implore that they might be excused.

The army was the element in society which had remained most faithful to the fundamental ideas of the Revolution. When, under the Directory, the royalist reaction seemed on the point of victory, it was foiled because the Republican Government, weak and divided as it was, could rely upon the army. For in the army the true republican principle of equality had been maintained as it had been nowhere else. Before the Revolution, officer and private had been separated by a yawning chasm. The officer was originally the feudal lord, then the landowner, then the nobleman; and no private soldier, however greatly he distinguished himself, could make his way up into this higher caste. During the Revolution these relations had been turned upside down. In the first place there were, amongst the crowds who volunteered as private soldiers, many men of noble birth; and in the second place, the nobility had been deprived of their right to officer the army; the officers were chosen from the ranks. Moreover, the fatigues and hardships shared alike by all during the wars of the Republic had made officers and privates comrades. In spite of regimental discipline, the

private soldier felt himself to be the brother-in-arms of his officer, whose equal he might any day become by his bravery and the fortunes of war.

A return to monarchical government would have been at once fatal to this new constitution of the army; and every mark of favour shown to the church was regarded as a presage or preliminary of such a return. Hence the army still spoke the old revolutionary language—was equally hostile to kings, nobles, and priests. It lived in apprehension of a restoration of the monarchy and of Catholicism, trusted in Bonaparte as the man who was to prevent this, and was prepared, in case of his defection, to appeal to another Jacobin general—Jourdan, Bernadotte, or Augereau —to arrange a counter *coup d'état.*

So bitter was the feeling in the army against the Catholic priesthood at the moment when the Concordat was signed, that secret meetings were held and a conspiracy was organised to annul this compact with the church. Many officers of rank, even distinguished generals, were mixed up in the affair. Moreau was in communication with the conspirators, although he never attended their meetings. At one of these meetings they went the length of resolving on the assassination of the First Consul. A certain Donnadieu offered to do the deed. But General Oudinot, who was present, informed Davoust of what was impending, and Donnadieu, who was arrested, confessed everything. The conspirators were dispersed; some were imprisoned, some banished, among the latter being General Monnier, who had commanded one of Desaix's brigades at Marengo.[1]

All this gives us a sufficiently clear idea of the state of opinion in the army. And the civil authorities were of the same mind. The plan of the Concordat had met with unanimous opposition. Talleyrand, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, had persistently advised against it. The Concordat struck at himself, as a former bishop, and with his political clearsightedness he foresaw its serious consequences for France. The Council of State received the First Consul's announcement that he had signed the com-

[1] L. von Stein, *Geschichte der socialen Bewegung in Frankreich*, i. 230.

pact with cold silence, and yet it was in this assembly that he had his most devoted adherents. Even Thiers, whose admiration for Bonaparte leads him to give an incomplete account of the episode of the Concordat, writes: "The members sat gloomy and dumb, as if they had seen one of the most beneficial achievements of the Revolution undone before their eyes. The icy silence was not broken. They dispersed without expressing an opinion, without saying a word."

The announcement met with even a worse reception in the Legislative Assembly. That body entered its protest against the re-establishment of the church by electing as its president Dupuis, the author of *Origine des cultes*, a book then much in repute, which explains Christianity as an astronomical myth (the work parodied in Monod's famous pamphlet on Napoleon as a sun-myth). Bonaparte, although he already felt himself possessed of almost unlimited power, dared not lay the Concordat alone before the Legislative Assembly; along with it he submitted to their approval the so-called Organic Laws, which aimed at establishing the relative independence of the French church. Knowing that they feared papal influence, he hoped by this means to secure their votes. But it was not until all its most energetic members had been expelled that the Assembly sanctioned the Concordat.

In the Tribune there was a regular revolt, and nothing less than a new breach of the constitution, namely, the reduction of the number of members of that Chamber to eighty, was required to overcome its opposition. To only three classes of men did the Concordat immediately give entire satisfaction. These were (1) the clergy, with the exception of those who had sworn allegiance to the Republican constitution and who were now dismissed; (2) the numerous possessors of church property, who had hitherto felt themselves insecure, but were now confirmed in their ownership; (3) the great, ignorant peasant class, who could neither read nor write, and who longed for their Sunday and their church pageantry.

Even in the circle of the First Consul's most intimate

associates one attempt after another had been made to shake his resolve. The spirit of the eighteenth century was strong in the men whose great or rare gifts made them the most eminent of the day, and it was these men whom Bonaparte chose for his companions. They all belonged to the class of "moderate Revolutionists," and were all disciples of Voltaire. Men like the famous astronomer Laplace, like the mathematicians Lagrange and Monge, told Bonaparte every day that he was on the point of bringing disgrace on his reign and his century. His old companions-in-arms, says Thiers, though they knew how the nation honoured them, dreaded the ridicule which awaited them if they knelt before the altar. Even his own brothers, who associated with the most talented writers of the day, importuned him not to stake his enormous power on a step so utterly at variance with the spirit of the times.

These strong expressions, like the previously quoted words of Madame Roland, show how certain men were that Christianity was to be regarded as dead.

It was not religious conviction which induced a man with a mind like Bonaparte's to act, regardless of all considerations and representations, in opposition to the whole of thinking France. Many of his utterances prove that he himself shared the opinions of the men he was opposing, that he did homage to the so-called enlightened deism of the eighteenth century. Certain assertions made by Bonaparte to Monge have been quoted to prove that he was an orthodox believer. "My religion is a very simple one," he said. "I see this great, complex, magnificent universe, and say to myself that it cannot have been produced by chance, but must be the work of an unknown, almighty being, who is as superior to man as the universe is to our cleverest machines." But would not Voltaire have expressed himself exactly thus? Bonaparte continued: "But this truth is too concise, too brief, for man; he wants to know many secrets about himself and his future which the universe does not tell him. Here religion steps in, and tells each individual what he longs to know. The one religion undoubtedly denies what the other asserts. But I do not, like

Volney, conclude from this that all religions are worthless, but rather that they are all good." This is the language of Lessing's Nathan. And quite in keeping with it is another assertion made to Monge: "In Egypt I was a Mahometan; I must be a Catholic in France. I do not believe in religions, but in the idea of a God."

Some years earlier, in a speech made before the Directory and all the public officials (December 1797), he had reckoned attachment to religion, along with attachment to monarchy and feudalism, among "the prejudices which the French people must overcome." When in Egypt, he had not scrupled to proclaim himself a Mussulman. His proclamation to the Arabian population contains this clause: "We, too, are good Mussulmans. Is it not we that have destroyed the power of the Pope, who commanded war upon Mussulmans?" Now he certainly (officially) called the same Pope "the holy Father" and (privately) "the good lamb"; nevertheless, when negotiations were being hindered by Romish intrigues, he wrote of him in his letters as "the old fox," and called the priests, or, to use his own word, *la prêtraille*, "imbecile bunglers."

His behaviour during these same negotiations with Rome witnesses equally strongly to his political wiliness and his unorthodoxy. Cardinal Consalvi, before setting out on his journey to Paris in 1801, had been imprudent enough to write to a friend of the anxiety he felt in thus venturing into the very jaws of the lion, into the hot-bed of that Revolution which had very recently shown itself so terribly hostile to religion and its priests. Bonaparte owned a sort of Odin's raven, which repeated all such private confessions to him. This raven was at the post office where the Cardinal's letter was opened, and its master consequently prepared just such a reception as was likely to make an impression on the man to whose character the letter gave a clue. It was evening when Consalvi arrived in Paris, but his audience was already appointed for the next morning, so that he had neither time to recover from the fatigues of the journey nor to take counsel with the Pope's representatives. Early in the morning he was driven to the Tuileries and ushered into

a small bare room which he took to be the anteroom of the First Consul's audience chamber. After he had waited here for some time, a small door was opened, and through it he passed, to his surprise, into a long suite of splendid apartments, where all the principal government officials, the Senate, the Legislative Assembly, the generals, and the staff were assembled. In the courtyard he could see several regiments drawn up for inspection. It was, as he himself wrote, the sudden transition from a hut to a palace. All the dazzling splendour and formidable signs of authority by which the consular dignity could be enhanced were here exhibited, and when, in the farthest room of the suite, the Cardinal at last entered the presence of the three Consuls, who sat surrounded by a splendid retinue, Bonaparte advanced to meet him and said curtly, in an imperious voice: "I know why you have come. You have five days for negotiation. If the treaty is not signed by that time, everything is at an end." Consalvi was undoubtedly perturbed for the moment, but he succeeded in gaining time, and with the subtlety and skill of Romish statecraft placed so many difficulties in Napoleon's way that the latter, in one of the stormy audiences which followed, shouted angrily and arrogantly: "If Henry VIII., who had not the twentieth part of my power, could change the religion of his country, how much easier is it for me to do it! I will change it, not in France alone, but throughout Europe. Rome will weep blood when it is too late."

In this contemptuous manner did the restorer of religion speak of the power he intended to restore.

It is, therefore, not altogether surprising that, as in the case of a similar attempt made by Julian the Apostate 1500 years before, laughter, sometimes only dreaded, sometimes actual, was the inseparable adjunct of each step taken towards the reinstitution of the old religion. When Bonaparte read Pius VII.'s first brief at a Council of State, the brief in which the Pope intimates that he takes "his dear son Talleyrand" into favour again, sounds of half-stifled laughter were heard among the audience. Even Bonaparte himself was not always able to preserve his

gravity. On the day when Cardinal Consalvi, apparelled in Roman purple, publicly presented him with a copy of the Concordat, the First Consul was suddenly seized with a convulsive fit of laughter which struck the whole assembly with consternation. And some years later than this he was still so little edified by religious rites, and so unable to control his countenance during their performance—he who as a rule showed himself a master in the art—that when the Pope was anointing him Emperor in 1804 he scandalised the spectators by yawning incessantly during the whole ceremony. Charles X., true Bourbon as he was, showed the proper seriousness when his turn came in 1825. With unmoved countenance, without the shadow of a smile, he allowed himself to be stripped to the waist and anointed, first on the head, then on breast, back, and arms.

Everything connected with the restoration of priestly authority and the reinstitution of Catholic worship was so utterly at variance with the customs and ideas which had prevailed in France since the Revolution that the witnesses of such rites could hardly believe their own eyes; they could not persuade themselves to take them seriously. In proof of this let me quote the words of such an eye-witness, De Pradt, Archbishop of Malines. He says: "If one single individual, by laughing, had given the signal, there would have been a perfectly inextinguishable Homeric outburst. This was the reef on which it was possible that everything might be wrecked. Fortunately Fouché, the Chief of Police, had taken the proper precautions, and, thanks to him, Paris kept a serious face." [1]

The occasion to which this utterance more particularly refers was that of the Pope's visit to Paris. A Pope in Paris! This was a risky experiment after all that had happened there during the last fifteen years, and with "a population so light-hearted and still so strongly influenced by philosophy." In hopes of inducing the Pope to give up the journey, his advisers at the last moment laid the above quoted Egyptian proclamation upon his table. But it was too late to shake his resolve. The meeting of the two

[1] De Pradt, *Histoire des quatre concordats*, ii. 212.

potentates took place at Fontainebleau. After the first exchange of compliments and cordialities, they drove to the Palace in the same carriage. Napoleon's face beamed with satisfaction, and as he handed the Pope up the steps, each of his unusually lively glances seemed to say: "Do you see my prize? I have him." By a comical inadvertency, the great procession to Paris was led by a troop of mounted Mamelukes. The sight of the bronze-hued visages of these Mahometan horsemen transported the spectator in fancy to Mecca. They made the entrance seem more like that of a Mahometan than of a Christian high priest. The Pope's own face betrayed the embarrassment he felt on finding himself in such an entirely new world. It was easily seen that his foot, though it was kissed by multitudes, did not tread this soil with perfect confidence. His priestly retinue, resplendent in gorgeous episcopal vestments, and the military court which came to meet it, shining in burnished mail, presented a strange contrast. One might, says Archbishop de Pradt, have imagined one's self suddenly transported to Japan at the moment of a visit from its spiritual to its temporal emperor.

In order thoroughly to understand the First Consul's reasons for determinedly adhering to and carrying out a project which at the first glance seems unpatriotic and impolitic, we must consider the matter in the first place from the purely economic point of view.

The Revolution had plunged France into economic distress. Prosperity was at an end; the population was threatened by famine; in the middle of the nineties more than half of the country lay uncultivated. The lands of the *émigrés* and the church had been paid for by their purchasers in paper-money, but this paper-money was valueless. The economic salvation of the country could only be accomplished by turning to account the resources which had been made available by the new distribution of the state property.

The land which had been taken from the nobility and the church had long been left entirely uncultivated because, since the fruits of the earth require time to blossom and mature,

no one was willing to plough and sow without the certainty that the ground would remain in his possession long enough to reward him for his labour. But such certainty was impossible as long as the old owners of the land were in the country and had not renounced their right to it. Nothing but their extermination could make the cultivation of the new national property a reasonable proceeding. It was because the Reign of Terror exterminated them that it was demanded and endured. When it had fulfilled its double task of saving the Republic and ensuring the security of the new distribution of property, it was overthrown. What the owners of property demanded after its fall was, first and foremost, a government under which it was possible for them to utilise their newly acquired land.

There were in France still only the elements of a modern social organism, of new conditions of proprietorship, of a new code of laws—everything was incomplete. The Estates had disappeared ; classes did not as yet exist. The new order of things had not yet become, as it were, a part of the family and the individual ethical consciousness. Security, durability, was what now had to be achieved.

This could not be done by restoring the monarchy ; for at this period monarchy still meant the old order of things, the old laws, the old distribution of property. Bonaparte gave France the security she desired. And he did more than this ; by his victories he spread the new French ideas and customs abroad throughout Europe.

The weak point in the international position of France at the beginning of the century lay in the antagonism between its new social order and the old social order prevailing in all the other countries. For the sake of its own security it was necessary that the French nation should metamorphose the social institutions of the nations it overcame. Bonaparte understood this, and introduced the new order of things wherever his influence permitted him to do so.

But, on the other hand, he considered it necessary to make concessions, real or apparent, in those matters in which he could not otherwise bring about uniformity between French conditions and those of the rest of Europe. To

ensure the stability of the new order of things, he felt obliged to do what he himself called *mettre les institutions de la France en harmonie avec celles de l'Europe.* He imagined that the imperial crown upon his head would reconcile the powers to the French Revolution ; he believed that the creation of a nobility would promote a more harmonious feeling between foreign nations and his own ; and in the same manner he considered it good policy to give France back a state church bearing some resemblance to the churches of other countries.

He began at the foundation, that is to say, with the church. The Concordat was concluded in 1802. In the same year was founded the order of the Legion of Honour, which satisfactorily answered its purpose as a mark of military distinction, but failed in what it was really intended to accomplish, the creation of an aristocracy. In 1804 the Empire was created. In 1807 the law of entail was reintroduced. In 1808 an entirely new aristocracy was created.

All this, however, did not produce real similarity between France and the rest of Europe. There was little resemblance between Napoleon, the elected emperor, and the kings and emperors of the old dynasties ; and Napoleon's aristocracy was an aristocracy without privileges, his church a church without endowments. But, although his various attempts at restoration resulted in the estrangement of many of the best elements in French society, it cannot be denied that they evidenced political sagacity in both internal and international questions.

There was sound political economy in the idea of the Concordat.

It had not as yet been possible to efface the species of disgrace which attached to the ownership of the confiscated property of the church and the nobles. Consequently it did not yet possess the same market value as other property. An inherited estate and an estate belonging to the nation yielding the same revenue did not find purchasers at the same price ; the latter had to be sold for forty per cent. less. The state could only alter this condition of matters in one

way, namely, by inducing the former possessors of what was now state property to make a distinct renunciation of their right to it. In most cases this could not be accomplished. As regarded church property, however, it was possible ; for the church had a head, whose decisions were binding on all his subjects.

By means of the Concordat with the Pope Bonaparte succeeded in giving the purchasers of church property that security which they had so long desired in vain. The Pope declared distinctly that neither he nor his successors would ever lay claim to the church lands which had been sold. So now there was no longer either risk or sin in owning them. In return the state promised the church a fixed income. The clergy of all ranks were to receive remuneration—a comparatively modest yearly payment in money and a dwelling-house. The churches which had not been sold were made over to them. As regarded the expenses entailed by the maintenance of public worship, the clergy were referred to their Commune or Department (which was entitled to levy a tax for this purpose) and to the charity of the faithful. Agreements of the same kind were come to in the matter of the church educational and charitable institutions. The state had deprived the Catholic church of at least 5000 millions of capital and 270 millions of revenue ; in return it promised a yearly revenue of seventeen millions —thus doing a good stroke of business at the same time that it tranquillised both the owners of church property and the great body of orthodox Catholics.

The Concordat placed the three chief Christian confessions and the Jewish religion in the same position ; they were all under state protection and their clergy were all dependent on the state for their incomes. Napoleon evidently overestimated the power which this gave him over the Catholic church, the only one of any importance in France. It soon opposed him, upon which he used violence, actually carrying off the Pope and keeping him prisoner. He himself set his Concordat at naught.

But its sound political and tactical basis enabled it to survive both this breach and its projector's fall.

The very important part which Bonaparte's personal ambition must have played in the evolution of the Concordat need only be suggested. With the authority of the church had been overthrown the authority of the monarchy. What was required was the restoration of the principle of authority. All the ceremonial of the old monarchy returned of its own accord at the moment when religion again became a power in the state. The revivification of the idea of authority which the Revolution misunderstood and scorned has been described as Napoleon's greatest and most arduous achievement.[1] It has been said with truth that no one ever developed the instinct and the gift of ruling as naturally and as boldly as he. But from the moment when, no longer content with being a power in virtue of his genius and of the new social order, he attempted to restore autocratic monarchy, what he relied on was not that idea of authority which amalgamates with the idea of right, and is an expression of the reasonableness of things, but the idea of authority which influences by dazzling and which is accepted blindly. And from that moment the alliance with the church was a necessity. When, in 1808, Wieland asked the Emperor why he had not adapted the religion he had reintroduced somewhat more to the spirit of the times, Napoleon laughed and replied: "Yes, my dear Wieland! It is certainly not a religion intended for philosophers. The philosophers believe neither in me nor my religion; and for the people who do believe one cannot do miracles enough or allow them to retain too many." It would hardly be possible to assert more plainly that authority is a dazzling, deluding power. On other occasions Napoleon employed the word which became the intellectual catchword of the following period—he described religion as *order*. Johannes Müller writes to his brother in 1806: "The Emperor spoke of what lay at the foundation of all religions, and of their necessity, and said that men required to be kept in order."

In this conception of religion as order we seem to trace some resemblance between Napoleon and the Jaco-

[1] See Guizot in the *Revue des deux mondes*, February 15, 1863.

bins, just as there is certainly a similarity between his attempts to rehabilitate the church and Robespierre's endeavours to reanimate religious feeling. As a politician Robespierre believed in the ordering, regulating power of religion, and as a politician at a period when the great majority of educated men were deists, he feared atheism as an idea altogether foreign to his age.

Bonaparte perceived what an invaluable instrument in the hand of a ruler a traditional religion and form of public worship was, and, if for no other reason than this, was determined on an alliance with the clergy, whom he, when a victor in Italy, had flattered and favoured with a view to eventualities. He was well aware that in France as in other countries the ignorant majority were still attached to the traditional religion, and that the teachings of the eighteenth-century philosophers could not possibly as yet have penetrated to the lowest and widest layer of the population. At an earlier period he had openly avowed his aims. At a meeting of his Council of State in the year 1800 he exclaimed: "With my government functionaries, my armed police, and my priests I am in a position to do whatever I please." To him the priest was a police official like the others, simply with a different uniform. In the notes which he dictated to Montholon he plainly intimates that the Concordat originated in his wish to attach the clergy to the new order of things, and to break the last tie which bound them, and the country with them, to the old royal house. He had carefully weighed in his own mind the choice which lay open to him between Catholicism and Protestantism. He conceded to his advisers that the inclination of the moment was probably more in the direction of Protestantism. "But," he sagaciously queried, "is Protestantism the old religion of France? Is it possible to create in a people habits, tastes, memories? The principal charm of a religion lies in its memories. When I am at Malmaison I never hear the church bell of the neighbouring village ring without feeling moved. And in France who could feel moved in a Protestant church,

which evokes no memories of childhood, and the cold, severe appearance of which is so little in harmony with the ideas of the people?" "Besides," said he to Las Casas, "all my great aims were to be attained much more certainly with the aid of Catholicism. It kept the Pope on my side, and with my influence in Italy and my military strength there I did not doubt that sooner or later, by one means or another, I should get this same Pope into my power. And from that moment what influence! what a lever with which to move public opinion throughout the world! . . . Had I returned from Moscow as a conqueror I should easily have induced the Pope to forget the loss of his temporal power. I should have made him an idol; he would have stayed with me. Paris would then have become the metropolis of the Christian world, and I should have ruled the religious as well as the political world. . . . *My* church councils would then have represented Christianity; the Popes would simply have been their presidents."

Note, too, the arguments employed by Portalis, the official vindicator and champion of the Concordat. Attempting to prove the impossibility of introducing a new religion and the necessity of restoring the old one, he writes: "In ancient times, in the days of ignorance and barbarism, it was possible for very great men to proclaim themselves inspired by God, and, following the example of Prometheus, to bring down fire from heaven to animate a new world. But what is possible among a people still in the process of development is not possible in an old, time-worn nation, whose habits and thoughts it is so difficult to change." He begins, we see, by appealing to the authority of custom. And he continues: "Men believe in a religion only because they take it to be the work of a God. All is lost as soon as the hand of man is allowed to appear." It is unnecessary to argue that this language is not the language of faith. What Portalis refers to are the unsuccessful attempts to supersede the so-called revealed religion by a revolutionary religion, a "religion of reason," like Rousseau's and Robespierre's. These attempts had failed although the new religion did not

need to be invented, but in reality already lived in the minds of the educated classes—had failed because it was impossible, directly after the overthrow of all outward authority, to give to the conviction shared by the majority of the educated an outward authority of the nature of that which had been overthrown. They bore no fruit, because their originators failed to grasp the fact that the human mind is perpetually remoulding its religious and moral conceptions, because they did not understand that the emancipated mind must inevitably feel itself moving onward even faster than before its emancipation towards a more perfect apprehension, and must consequently feel itself compelled ever and anew to reject every limiting, dogmatic principle. But to return, because the spontaneously evolved and chosen form of belief had proved untenable, to the much more untenable, old, petrified form, was certainly better politics than logic. There was no argument possible except an appeal to the direct utility of the proceeding. Therefore Portalis returns again and yet again to the position, not that religion is true, but that it is useful, that it is necessary, that it is impossible to rule without it, that morality without religious dogmas would be "like justice without courts for its administration." It is plain that the doctrine of hell-fire, as long as it is believed in, is a powerful instrument in the hand of a ruler. Portalis is actually honest enough to say in plain words: "The question of the truth or falsehood of this or that positive religion is a purely theological question, which does not concern us. Even if they are false, religions have this advantage, that they are a hindrance to the spread of arbitrary, independent teaching. They form a faith-focus for individuals. Governments are at ease with regard to ascertained dogmas which do not change. Superstition is, so to speak, regulated, circumscribed, confined within bounds which it either cannot or dare not overstep."

With subtle duplicity Bonaparte endeavoured to represent the restoration of the church in a different light to the different parties. To the Catholics it was represented as a service to Christianity only paralleled by the deeds of Con-

stantine and Charlemagne, to the philosophers as an act by which the church was completely subjected to the state and the secular authorities. "It is an inoculation against religion," said Napoleon to the philosopher Cabanis; "in fifty years there will be no religion left in France." So much is certain, that he had no doubt whatever that by bringing about this reconciliation between church and state he was ensuring himself an obedient and devoted ally. To what extent he was mistaken is matter of history. He had soon cause to repent bitterly of having allied himself with the most undeveloped and ignorant, instead of the ablest and best, part of the nation. De Pradt tells that he heard Napoleon say again and again "that the Concordat was the greatest mistake of his reign." It can hardly be called a political mistake. But it certainly was the first and decisive departure from the spirit of the Revolution. It ensured certain of the secular results of that Revolution, but ensured them at the expense of the progress of French civilisation.[1]

[1] Thiers, *Histoire du Consulat;* Lanfrey, *Histoire de Napoléon I.;* Mignet, *Histoire de la Révolution*, ii.; De Pradt, *Histoire des quatre concordats;* Portalis, *Discours et rapports sur le concordat;* Lorenz von Stein, *Geschichte der socialen Bewegung in Frankreich*, i.; Taine, *Le régime moderne*, i.

III

THE PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY

BONAPARTE, intending as he did to deal the Republic a death-blow, struck at its heart. He recognised that it would never be possible thoroughly to suppress civil liberty unless he first suppressed the endeavour after spiritual liberty which had become ever more strenuous during the course of the Revolution. The Concordat prepared the way for the recovery by ecclesiasticism of all its old power.

It appeared to contemporaries as if all the tremendous exertions which had been made might now be regarded as made in vain. When we call to mind what had been done we cannot but be filled with astonishment. The movement towards emancipation which had begun in the days of the Renaissance with warm enthusiasm for Greek and Roman antiquity, which next, in England, through the genius of Newton, had acquired as its mainstay a new conception of the universe, and, gradually taking possession of natural science, had brought forth a new philosophy as its offspring and freemasonry as its witness—this same movement had, like a flying spark, been carried, through Voltaire's mind, to France. And here a marvellous thing happened. Only a few decades after Corneille had written *Polyeucte* and Racine *Athalie*, a few years after Bossuet had preached absolute obedience and Pascal written in letters of fire his creed of absolute paradox, a handful of men, most of them exiled or in disgrace, succeeded, under perfectly autocratic rule, in winning over to their opinions first the ablest men of the day, then the upper classes, then princes and princesses who were soon to be kings and empresses, and finally the middle classes. Thus the new truth, which was born in low estate, but was revered even in its cradle by mighty kings—by Frederick of Prussia,

Joseph of Austria, and Catherine of Russia—became the great power among the rising generation, numbering among its adherents even abbés and priests.

Human reason had risen and freed itself with athletic strength. Everything that existed had to justify its existence. Where men heretofore had prayed for a miracle they now investigated into causes. Where they had believed in a miracle they discovered a law. Never before in the history of the world had there been such doubt, such labour, such inquiry, such illumination. The new philosophers had not the weapons of authority at their command, but only those of satire, and it was with satire and mockery that they at first attacked. They annihilated with laughter. On Voltaire's refined scorn followed Rousseau's virulent wrath. Never before had there been such undermining or such declaiming. Human reason, which in every domain had for centuries been compelled to drudge like a serf, which had been intoxicated with legends and lulled to sleep with psalms and set phrases, had been roused as if by the crow of a cock and had leaped up wide awake. Was all that the heroes of reason had thought out, and its martyrs suffered for, now to be swept aside as useless? Were the enthusiasms that had made so many of the noblest hearts beat high, and inspired them with courage on the battlefield and the scaffold, now all to be squeezed together like the genius in the fairy tale, and shut up for good in an iron strong-box sealed with the seal of an Emperor and a Pope?

For the time being the emancipatory movement was checked. It began once more to be inexpedient not to profess faith in revealed religion, and after the fall of Napoleon it was even dangerous. In religious matters those in power never carry on the controversy by opposing reasons with reasons. The proofs of the gainsayers were not answered by proofs, but by the stopping of commons. The majority of the men without private means who had prepared themselves for government appointments, and could not overcome their irresistible desire to dine well every day, were entirely reliable supporters of the re-establishment of the church. No one over twenty-five years of age will be surprised by the number

of supporters orthodoxy gained from the moment when it advanced from being an absurdity to being a means of subsistence.

To such converts add the great party of the timorous, all those who lived in fear of the Red Republic, and in whose eyes religion was, first and foremost, a safeguard against it. It was among these that the army of the principle of authority obtained most recruits. From a religious body the church suddenly turned into a political party.

A change in outward conditions is always prepared for by a change in opinions, and the outward change even more certainly produces opinions which correspond to the new conditions. The feelings and thoughts which prepared for the Concordat were, after its conclusion, at perfect liberty to express themselves ; they called forth others of the same nature; and with the expression of these feelings and thoughts in literature began an intellectual movement which has its point of departure in the Concordat and translates that document into the language of literature. It is the course of this intellectual movement which we are to follow. If we omitted to do so, there would be a sensible hiatus in that psychology of the first half of our century which it is the object of these studies to elaborate. Granted that the subject is not a paying one, that it is neither rich nor attractive, it is nevertheless, from our point of view, a very important one.

From which class of society did the literary movement emanate? If it could by any possibility have emanated from the peasantry, there might have been something simple-hearted and touching about it ; if from the ranks of the hardly tried, suffering priesthood, it would perhaps have attracted attention by its fervour ; if it had been the production of the party who, following the example of their ruler, attached themselves to the church from worldly motives, it would have been marked by the absence of any inspiring idea. But none of these supposed cases is the actual one. These three groups formed the public for the new literature, were its sounding-board and echo ; not one of them was intellectually fertile. The new Catholic school of

literature was destitute of the qualities of simplicity and fervour. But it was not without an inspiring idea. With conviction and determination it vindicates the idea which the Revolution had utterly repudiated and discredited, namely, the principle of authority. Its tendency is rather political than religious. Its leaders do not desire so much to rescue souls as to rescue tradition; they crave for religion as a panacea for lawlessness; the persistency of their appeal to authority is due to their bankruptcy in everything except outward authority.

The movement begins at widely separated, disconnected points; none of its originators are at first acquainted with each other. During the Revolution Chateaubriand, for instance, is wandering about in America, De Maistre in Switzerland; Bonald plans his first work at Heidelberg. As soon as the intellectual reaction begins, most of the emigrants return home, and the principle of authority is championed in literature both by foreign, independent writers like De Maistre, and by men like Chateaubriand and Bonald, whom Bonaparte's assumption of power recalls to France. These latter attach themselves for the time being to Bonaparte, in his capacity of restorer of the church; but soon, either during his reign or after his fall, they espouse, with far greater warmth, far more strength of conviction, the cause of the Bourbons, to which their own fundamental principle draws them with all the force of consistency. Napoleon's plan of gaining the support of the church and depriving the Bourbons of the sympathy of the clergy by means of the Concordat failed, as it was naturally predestined to do. Soon there was open war between him and the Pope; and soon the literary movement, the origin of which is contemporaneous with the Concordat, declares itself openly on the side of royalty with its supposed rightful claims.

The originators of the movement naturally feel drawn to each other; they make one another's acquaintance, and soon found a kind of school. They have several important characteristics in common, characteristics which are also to be found even in the latest disciples of the school, men

like Lamennais, De Vigny, Lamartine, and Hugo. They are all without exception of noble birth and bound by personal ties to the old royal families. De Maistre was the King of Sardinia's ambassador in Russia. Bonald served in his youth in Louis XV.'s regiment of Musketeers, and during that King's last days went regularly to his bedside to get the parole for the day—he had had smallpox, and consequently ran no risk of infection. The first time his duty brought him into the apartment of the new King, Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette honoured the young Musketeer with a friendly look and a few gracious words. That last glance of a dying King, who bequeathed to his successor a ruined monarchy, and that first look of a young, beautiful, and hopeful Queen were never effaced from Bonald's memory. They became the guiding stars of his life. As to Chateaubriand, directly he heard of the judicial murder of the Duke of Enghien he sent in his resignation as Secretary of Legation under Napoleon's government, and from that moment until 1824 acted the part of a faithful servant of the Bourbons. It was a rôle which he entered into so seriously, and which circumstances rendered so compulsory, that he played it to perfection. As regards the next generation, Lamartine has told us, in the preface to his *Meditations* and in his *Reminiscences* how, as a young officer in the Guards, he galloped by the side of Louis XVIII.'s carriage when that monarch moved from Paris to St. Germain. De Vigny was from his childhood an enthusiastic Royalist; in the days of the Empire his father gave him the Cross of St. Louis to kiss; his ideas of feudal fealty made him an officer of the King; his pride led him to stand to his colours even when all the hopes he had conceived of the Legitimist monarchy were disappointed and superseded by an unexpressed feeling of contempt; after the Revolution of 1830 he became the unprejudiced, but reserved and laconic Conservative whose acquaintance we make in his later works.[1] Victor Hugo has himself sufficiently explained to his readers how powerful was the influence exercised upon him as a young author by the

[1] See John Stuart Mill's essay on De Vigny in *Dissertations and Discussions*, i.

recollection of the Royalist surroundings of his childhood, and especially by the teaching of his mother, the enthusiastically loyal Breton bourgeoise.

The theoretic leaders of this school are not great geniuses. They are strong, despotic characters, who love power because they require obedience, and authority because they desire submission ; or they are proud and vain members of the aristocracy of intellect, who would rather bow the knee to a paradox than follow with the crowd of writers who have done homage to reason ; or (but this only seldom) they are romanticists, who are moved to tears by the thought of the faith which they no longer possess, but which they make desperate efforts to acquire. They are fighters like De Maistre and Lamennais—men made of the stuff of pontiffs and inquisitors, or they are obstinacy personified, like Bonald and Chateaubriand, who speak as they do more from obstinacy than persuasion. "Moi, catholique entêté," says Chateaubriand of himself. That is the correct word—obstinate, not fervent.

Their power over their contemporaries lay in their talent. For talent is such a magician that it can sustain any cause for a considerable time. Chateaubriand was the colourist of the school ; De Maistre, with his strength of character, his wit, and his astounding theories, its leader ; Bonald, with his rules for everything, its schoolmaster. The best of the young, aspiring poets of the day began their career under its influence, and though it did not retain its hold on them long, it gained by their means a popularity which, added to the authority possessed by its thinkers, was sufficient to make its cause seem for a short time victorious, more especially as the restoration of the Bourbons realised its political ideals.

In the course of a few years, however, all its best men, with music playing and colours flying, went over to the enemy's camp. The school was dissolved by its own essential unnaturalness. The principle which held it together, that principle of tradition and authority which had presented the appearance of an impregnable fortress, turned out to be undermined, hollow, concealing under its very foundations an unsuspected explosive. Men discovered that

they had taken up their position on the top of a powder magazine, and hastened to leave it before it blew up.

Sylvain Maréchal writes in a book published in 1800 (*Pour et contre la Bible*): "A very decided religious reaction distinguishes this first year of the nineteenth century." It distinguishes the first twenty, and in countries of slow development and those inclined to be stationary, at least seventy.

The literary reaction against the spirit of the eighteenth century does not begin as a definitely religious reaction. We have seen that in the group of works which I have designated the "Emigrant Literature" it "has not yet become submission to authority, but is the natural and justifiable defence of feeling, soul, passion, and poetry against frigid intellectuality, exact calculation, and a literature stifled by rules and dead traditions." Of the first step in this reactionary movement I wrote: "The first move is only to take Rousseau's weapons and direct them against his antagonist, Voltaire."[1] Men are no longer contented with Voltaire's cold deism; they oppose to it Rousseau's copious and vague sentimentality. They follow in Rousseau's footsteps, build on the foundation of his emotionalism and imagination. A glance at the successive phases of the Revolution has shown us that this movement is, as it were, presaged in the midst of the great upheaval by Robespierre's attempt to place Rousseau as an obstacle in the way of the annihilation of all the sentiment which had been so closely associated with the tradition and authority of the church, and which threatened to disappear with the church. In its origin the great religious reaction was, as we have seen, only the revulsion, the revolt, of feeling against reason; what begot it was the perfectly vague craving to feel and to give expression to feeling. The history of the movement is the history of the lamentable manner in which this craving was gradually misdirected.

The first step in the reaction was the election of Rousseau to lead the revolt, the second was a revolt against Rousseau. Let us open almost any work by Bonald, De Maistre, or

[1] *Emigrant Literature*, p. 199.

Lamennais, and we find that its point of departure is an eager attempt to refute Rousseau, or, rather, to satirise and crush him. During the first stage of the reaction *the principle of sentiment* was opposed to the dominion of reason; during the second, *the principle of authority* is championed against all former principles, that of sentiment included. The transition from the one stage to the other is marked by the endeavour to vindicate and reinstate authority by means of an appeal to sentiment. This is aimed at in Ballanche's *Du Sentiment considéré dans la Littérature et dans les Arts* (1801), and is also the main aim of Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme* (1802).

Rousseau is now regarded as the most dangerous advocate of the ideas of the eighteenth century. A short account of the charges brought against him will show what there was of truth in them, what of falsehood.

First, the political attack. A fact which the nineteenth century has repeatedly insisted on, and which must not be forgotten, is that the eighteenth century was devoid of any proper understanding and appreciation of history. One of its most famous representatives, D'Alembert, went so far as to wish that the remembrance of all past times could be blotted out. The naïve belief of Rousseau and his century that isolated thought, unconnected with history or reality, is capable of changing the whole existing order of things, was now universally contested. The preceding generation had believed that all would be well when they had a written constitution which abolished what they considered abuses and established what they regarded as right. They had looked upon this piece of paper, or, to use their phraseology, these tables of the law, as the real constitution. In confutation of this idea, Joseph de Maistre propounds his theory: "Man cannot make a constitution, and a lawful constitution cannot be written." He is both unmistakably right and extraordinarily wrong.

He has a prescience of the great truth, which may be regarded as acknowledged in the politics of to-day, that the true constitution of a country is the actual existing distribution of power, a distribution which is not changed although dilettante politicians alter it upon a sheet of

paper. In De Maistre's judgment the powers that be have right on their side. Any rebellion seems to him a crime; but, keenly alive to realities, he has no faith in a written constitution as a preventive. Writing on the subject of a preventive of lawlessness, he says: "It may be custom, or conscience, or a papal tiara, or a dagger, but it is always a something." The written constitution alone is to him nothing real.

His great mistake is to be found in the reason on which he bases his aversion to this written constitution. He is of opinion that what is written, what is foreseen and determined by human wisdom, is to be regarded as an infringement on the province of divine providence. "It is impertinence towards God not to have confidence in the unforeseen future; every government which is founded upon settled laws is founded upon a usurpation of the prerogative of the divine law-giver." The real working constitution he regards, on the contrary, as being of a divine nature, for, from his orthodox standpoint, he maintains that it is God who makes the nations what they are. To the sovereignty of the people he, like Bonald and Lamennais, opposes the sovereignty of God, thus finally anchoring in theocracy.

Rousseau's political theories were undoubtedly most imperfect, and it was easy to perceive the dangers that lay concealed in them. His principle, that no one is bound to obey laws to which he has not given his consent, not only strikes at the authority which is power, but also at the authority which is simply a form of reason, and thus makes all government impossible. His second principle, that sovereignty is an attribute of the people, may, if the word "people" be unwisely apprehended, lead to tyranny of the majority and make all liberty impossible. His third great principle, that all men are equal, may lead to universal levelling instead of to justice. Here are enough points of attack for a criticism undertaken from the modern standpoint. Hegel in his day attempted such a criticism. He propounded a new interpretation of the sovereignty of the people, defining it as really meaning the sovereignty of the state. Heiberg, who was given to carrying the Hegelian

theories to extremes, presents us (in his essay "On Authority") with Hegel's idea in the astounding and reactionary proposition that "it is a matter of no consequence whether or not the interests of the citizens are furthered by the development of the state, since it is not the state which exists for the sake of the citizens, but the citizens who exist for the sake of the state."[1] Though we of the present day have a distinct antipathy to such propositions, we nevertheless give to these protests against Rousseau's theories the attention which we consider due to any development of modern thought. But the protests of De Maistre's day were neither based on thought nor on reason, but purely and simply on belief in authority; and the opposition is, moreover, dishonourable in its methods; the attack is always directed against some isolated proposition, which, if we read it with the desire to understand it, is comprehensible, but which it is easy to reduce to an absurdity, because of the audacious manner in which it is expressed.

Bonald, for instance, scoffs at Rousseau for saying: "A people has always the right to change its laws, even the best of them; for if it chooses to do itself an injury, who has the right to prevent it?" The proposition is a rash one, but it does not in reality justify the retrogressive step; it only denies the right of outsiders to make it an excuse for interfering; and the reader is unpleasantly affected when he discovers that the reason why Bonald is so exasperated by these words is that he considers the law-giving power to be the prerogative of God, not of the people.

Rousseau's social theories were also violently attacked. It is not difficult to understand how Rousseau, with the society of his own day before his eyes, should arrive at the conclusion that it would be quite possible to do without a society at all; but this mistaken idea, in combination with the fanciful one of a lost, happy, natural condition, led him to formulate such a proposition as: "Man is born good, and society corrupts him," and to give utterance to the comic paradox, which reappears in all the polemical works of the

[1] Hegel, *Werke*, viii., "Philosophie des Rechts," 367; Heiberg, *Pros. Skrifter*, 10 B, 335.

Restoration period, pierced with refutations as a pin-cushion is with pins: "The man who thinks is a degenerate animal." Such utterances lent themselves to attack. In the ardour of his impeachment of society, Rousseau permits himself to say. "Society is not a consequence of the nature of man. Everything that has not its origin in the nature of things has disadvantages, and civil society has most of all." "Society!" cries Bonald, not without eloquence; "as if society consisted of the walls of our houses or the ramparts of our towns! as if there were not, wherever a human being is born, a father, a mother, a child, a language, heaven, earth, God, and society!" The doctrine he instils into his contemporaries is that the earliest society was a family, and that in the family authority is not elective, but a result of the nature of things. To the doctrine that society is the result of a voluntary agreement, of a contract, he opposes his doctrine that society is enforced (*obligée*), is the production of a power—whether it be the power of persuasion or of arms. To the theory that power, that authority, originally received the law from the people he opposes his theory that there can be no people before there is a power. To the revolutionary principle that society is *fraternity and equality* he opposes the principle of patriarchal absolutism, that society is *paternity and dependence*. Power belongs to God, and is communicated by Him. Here again the argument of historical actuality proves extraordinarily convincing, and the author seizes the opportunity to deduce, as it were surreptitiously, the doctrine of the one and only lawful sovereignty, sovereignty by the grace of God, from our respect for history and reality.

In order to strike as deadly a blow as possible at Rousseau's conception of the state as a contract, this conception was represented as not only foolish, but actually criminal. And yet it is but the natural, the inevitable outcome of the eighteenth century's over-estimation of the conscious side of human life and want of understanding of the unconscious, the instinctive. How much more justly does Hegel judge Rousseau! He gives him the credit of having laid down a principle, "the constituent of which is thought"—in other words, will—as the principle of the state, observing that he

was only mistaken in understanding by will merely the individual, conscious, and arbitrary will, a misunderstanding which leads to "other, merely reasonable conclusions, subversive of the absolutely divine, and its authority and majesty."[1] In the *Contrat Social* Jean-Jacques had attempted to find the basis of governments and laws in the nature of man and society, taken purely in the abstract. But before Rousseau's day Montesquieu had written: "I have never heard law discussed without a careful investigation being made into the origin of societies, a proceeding which to me seems perfectly absurd. If human beings did not form a society, if they avoided or fled from one another, one would ask the reason and try to find out why they kept separate; but, as it is, they are all born bound to each other. A son is born in his father's home and remains connected with him—this is society and its cause."

If, for the relation of the child to the father, we substitute the relation to the mother, as being even a closer one, the reasoning is perfectly correct. But Rousseau, leaving this solution out of the question, desired to show what ideas had led men to hold together, what aim they proposed to themselves in so doing, and by what means they could best attain this aim. Now, it admits of no dispute that it is only by the mutual consent of its members that society exists. This consent or contract is most undoubtedly the spiritual basis on which society rests; but the contract is entered into tacitly, is an understood thing, has always existed, has consequently no external actuality. In exactly the same manner we accept the geometric definition of the origin of a ball: A ball, or sphere, is generated by the revolution of a semicircle about its diameter. The definition is perfectly correct, but has no connection whatever with the material conditions requisite to the existence of any given ball. Never yet has a ball been made by causing a semicircle to revolve round its axis.

This same figure may be retained as giving an exact idea of the style of reasoning on social subjects characteristic of the eighteenth century, nay, of the whole intellectual ten-

[1] Hegel, *Werke*, viii. 314.

dency of the century. It is a dissolving, isolating tendency; it is in the direction of geometry and algebra; men endeavour to comprehend the most difficult and most complicated real situations by the aid of abstract ideas. This is a weakness which enables Bonald to gain an easy victory by an appeal to the principle of power. He opposes Rousseau's disintegrating theories with the doctrines of the days of the old absolute monarchy: "God is the sovereign *power* that rules all beings; the God-man is the *power* that rules mankind, the head of the state is the *power* that rules all his subjects, the head of the family is the *power* in his house. As all power is created in the image of God and originates with God, all power is absolute." [1]

Rousseau is, thirdly, attacked in the domain of morality. He had endeavoured to make "the inward, unwritten law," of which Antigone speaks, the source of every outward moral law. He had said: "What God desires man to do, He does not let him know through another man; He tells him it Himself, writes it on the table of his heart." If this be the case, what becomes of tradition and authority and revelations at second hand? Bonald consequently replies: "If man were obliged to obey this inward law, he would be as devoid of will as the stone, which must submit to the law of gravitation; if, on the contrary, he is at liberty not to obey it, an *authority* is required, which shall direct his attention to these laws and teach him to obey them." Thus in morals too the guiding power is transferred from man's own inward feeling to outward authority.

The antagonism to Rousseau is so strong that Bonald, for instance, writes page upon page of declamation against the philosopher's appeal to mothers to nurse their children themselves. One would imagine that, in this instance at least, Rousseau's theories would meet with the approval of the stern inculcators of duty. Not at all—the appeal in question shows that Jean-Jacques looked upon human beings as simply animals. "J. J. Rousseau declared in the name of nature that it was the duty of women to suckle their chil-

[1] Haller, in his famous *Restauration der Staatswissenschaft*, chooses exactly the same point of departure as Bonald, namely, an attack on *Le Contrat Social*.

dren, exactly as she-animals do, and for the same reason. . . . Fathers and mothers, regarded by the philosophers as simply males and females, in turn regarded their children simply as their young." [1] And why is Bonald so wrathful? Evidently because he fears that Rousseau may deprive religion of some of its credit by issuing a reasonable commandment not inscribed on the tables of its laws. "Rousseau," he goes on to say, "probably imagined that he had surprised religion in the neglect of a duty; but possibly religion, more far-sighted than he, feared anything which might serve young married people as a reason or excuse for living separated from each other, even momentarily." The motherly solicitude of the Catholic church for the happiness of spouses and the multiplication of the human race—this also is to be placed in the clearest light by means of an attack on Rousseau.

We have seen to what misunderstanding of the idea of society the unhistoric, mathematical line of thought of the eighteenth century led. A kindred line of thought produced a very similar misunderstanding of poetry. In their admiration for mathematical reasonableness, and for the certainty with which general truths had been arrived at by mathematical inferences, men were eager to communicate to language, as far as possible, the quality of mathematically exact expression. Condillac defined science as *une langue bien faite*, *i.e.* a perfectly clear and perfectly exact language. The fact was not sufficiently appreciated that, when it is desired to reproduce impressions which are different in different persons, and which even in the same person may change from one moment to another, a flexible, impressionable language is required, a language which accepts its spirit and whole stamp from the person using it. Scientific men began to deride what they called poetry and style, and maintained that in writing thought was everything, form nothing. Barante, who, in a critical work published at the beginning of the new century, was the first to protest against these ideas of his

[1] Bonald, *Du Divorce, considéré au 19me siècle relativement à l'état domestique et à l'état publique de la société* (edition of 1817, pp. 29 and 31).

age, argues cleverly: "When Chimène says to Rodrigue: 'Go! I do not hate thee,' it is plain, if we submit these words to calm investigation, that they mean the same as if she had said: 'Go! I love thee'; and yet, if she used the latter expression, she would be quite a different being; her consideration for her father would be gone, and so would her modesty and her charm."

The poets, who were in reality influenced by the same ideas as the scientists, and were as far as they from conceiving of style as the direct outcome of the personality, set themselves to work to fabricate style, and spoke of it as we speak of the music composed for any given libretto. They looked upon the art of writing as a perfectly external art, and the descriptive school, with Delille at their head, took unpoetic themes—physics, botany, astronomy, sea-voyages —and out of them manufactured style. (See poetical works of Boisjolin, Gudin, Aimé Martin, and Esménard.) Cournand actually wrote a poem in four cantos on style itself and its various species. Poetry was regarded as an artificial form communicated to the matured thought. This was the idea which Buffon had contradicted in his notable proposition: *Le style c'est l'homme même*, a proposition which was presently to become the most hackneyed of quotations, inevitable whenever the subject of style was broached, and employed by none so frequently as by those who were neither men nor possessors of style.[1] The poets of the eighteenth century derived their conception of the nature of poetry from their own practice. As their own poetry, their own language, was not a natural product, but the result of labour and the observance of certain rules respecting elegance of expression, choice of similes, and employment of mythology, they naturally believed that language and thought originated independently of each other.

When Bonald, in opposition to their theory, propounds

[1] We owe to Madame Girardin the one witty thing that has been said on the subject of Buffon's dictum. When trying to prove that in each of George Sand's novels the influence of some real personage enthusiastically admired by the authoress is to be distinctly traced, she quotes the saying of a wit: "It is when we are criticising the works of women writers that we are most often obliged to exclaim with Buffon: *Le style c'est l'homme*" (Le Vicomte de Launay, *Lettres parisiennes*, i. 89).

his, namely, that language and thought cannot be separated —the theory upon which (in his principal work, *La législation primitive*) he founds his whole system—he is unquestionably in the right. But this doctrine meets with the same fate as other doctrines propounded by the restorers of the past ; the disease of orthodoxy from which the author suffers causes him to twist and turn every true thought until he makes a perfect monster out of it. "The answer to the vital question regarding the intellectual life of man may," says Bonald, "be given in the following form: Man must think his words before he speaks his thought. In other words, man must know the word before he speaks it, which self-evident fact excludes all possibility of his having himself invented language." Thus Bonald arrives at the favourite theory of the nineteenth-century reactionaries, namely, that language was originally given to man by God. Kierkegaard expresses the same idea when he declares that it cannot possibly be conceded that man himself invented language (*On the Idea of Fear*). Why? Because it was revealed to him by God, ready made.

It is Locke's and Condillac's reasonable theory of the slow evolution of language and ideas which Bonald contradicts with his principle of the necessity of an original revelation of language and ideas. Upon this belief of his he bases nothing less than the dogma of the existence of God, which entails all the others. To it we always come back, turn where we will. As none of the reactionaries have any idea of science—they are men of good parts with such an education as is given in the Jesuit schools —there is nothing in the way of scientific nonsense which they do not talk and write. The science of language is sacrificed along with political and social science on the altar of theocracy. It may be mentioned as a remarkable instance of the manner in which these reactionaries held together that in 1814 Bonald published a new edition of De Maistre's work, *Sur le principe générateur des constitutions politiques*, that is to say, he circulated a book in which written constitutions were strongly condemned, although he himself, arguing from the standpoint of his

theory of the direct revelation of language, had come to the conclusion that every commandment, from the ten commandments downwards, must have been noted down, must exist in black and white. But to him, as to De Maistre, the real matter of importance was that the constitution should make no concession to the spirit of the times, that authority should stand secure, unimperilled by the gales of liberty; therefore he did not hesitate to profit by the aid of a co-religionary, even though he differed from him on an important point.

It was not enough for the reactionaries that they themselves had been brought up in the Jesuit schools; they were fain to have the whole youth of the nation sent there. De Maistre was all his life the patron and ardent champion of the Jesuits. At the court of St. Petersburg he exposed himself to much unpleasantness rather than throw them over.

The third part of Bonald's *Législation primitive*, which treats chiefly of education, is directed against Rousseau's *Émile;* he cannot forgive this book for teaching that religion ought not to form a part of children's education. In all seriousness he mentions, as an example of the fatal results of Rousseau's principles of education, that during the last five months seventy-five children have been sentenced to punishment for various crimes. He then proceeds to expound his own principles. Their aim, as was to be expected, is the suppression of all individuality. "We require a continuous, universal, uniform (*perpétuel, universel, uniforme*) course of instruction, and consequently continuity, universality, and uniformity in our teachers; therefore we must have a corps of teachers, for without a corps we can ensure neither continuity nor universality nor uniformity." He maintains that married teachers cannot be expected to sacrifice themselves to their calling, and unmarried ones are equally unserviceable unless they are under the restraint of religious vows; "for secular teachers, even though they be unmarried, are incapable of forming a real corps, because they enter it and leave it according to their own inclination and caprice; moreover, no father of a family would dare to entrust his children

to an unmarried man whose morals were not certified by his religious vows and discipline." By force of these arguments he arrives at the conclusion that the whole education of the nation should be entrusted to the clergy, should be distinctly religious, and should early accustom children to reverence that authority to which they are to submit throughout their lives.

Obstinate insistence on the principle of authority is, then, the distinctive, the ruling feature of this literary group. The French rebuilders of society champion the principle with much more ardour than those of Germany, partly because of their racial peculiarities, partly because of their different religion. The reactionary movement in German literature has its origin, as we have seen, in the law-defying self-assertion and self-will of the individual.[1] In spite of its Catholic tendencies and its apery of Catholicism, German Romanticism never became so entirely Catholic, so deferential to authority, as the French reaction. Teutonic and Protestant self-will always militated against this. The French mind yielded easily. And it must be allowed that there is something attractive in the complete, unmitigated reaction which is lacking in the undecided, incomplete reaction.

Even when the revulsion is at hand, and the dissolution of the school fast approaching, we find Lamennais maintaining in his book on indifference in the matter of religion that it is not sentiment, and still less the spirit of investigation, which is the mark of true religion, but that "the true religion is incontestably the religion which is founded upon the strongest possible *visible authority*." And from the very beginning of the movement the utterances of all its adherents breathe the same spirit. To Bonald religion is a kind of police for maintaining order. In proof of this let me quote a few sentences which I have collected from his works:—

"Religion, which is the *bond* in every society, more especially tightens the knot of political society; the very word religion (*religare*) sufficiently indicates that it is the natural and necessary *bond* of human society in general,

[1] Cf. *The Romantic School in Germany*, p. 42.

of the family, and of the state.—Religion introduces *order* into society, because it teaches men whence *power* and duties proceed.—The principles *of order* are an essential part of religion.—Religion will triumph because, as Malebranche says, *order* is the inviolable law of minds." Rejoicing at the spread of the reaction, he exclaims: "We already see all European authors who have any real title to fame acknowledging or defending the necessity of the Christian religion, and stamping their works with the seal of its immortality; for—let authors mark this well—all works in which the fundamental principles of *order* are denied or controverted will disappear; only those in which they are acknowledged and reverently upheld will descend with honour to posterity." We observe that there is no question here of piety, of fervent faith, of sentiment. Religion is the bond, is order, is the principle of authority. How far we are from Germany, where even moonlight sentimentality turned into religion!

Curiously enough, this enthusiastic vindication of religion as order gives Bonald a certain resemblance (which he himself would have angrily refused to acknowledge) to the man he detested almost more than any other, namely, Robespierre. Robespierre, too, had a passionate love of order, and for its sake desired a state religion. The difference is that Robespierre only wished such order as would preserve the gains of the Revolution, whilst to Bonald the word meant the sum and substance of all old tradition.

He and De Maistre are at one on this point. De Maistre says: "Without a Pope no sovereignty, without sovereignty no unity, without unity no *authority*, without authority no faith." He places monarchy beyond the reach of all criticism and investigation by pronouncing it to be a *miracle*. He eulogises brute force as such. In his books he submits military society to the discipline of the corporal's cane, civil society to that of the executioner's axe.[1] This last was the measure which Robespierre took in grim reality, though not until he saw no salvation for the Revolution except in a dictatorship. Thus De Maistre, too, has his points of

[1] Cf. *The Romantic School in Germany*, pp. 12, 326.

resemblance to Robespierre. He puts the finishing touch to his work in a eulogy of the Inquisition.

What these writers vindicate is, then, authority and power. In the state authority is overthrown by popular institutions which entail compulsory changes of ministry; in religion it is endangered when the clergy attain to comparative independence of Rome (hence De Maistre's book against Gallicanism), or are made completely independent ("by Presbyterianism," as Bonald has it); in the family it is done away with from the moment that divorce is permitted under any circumstances whatsoever. King, minister, and subject; Pope, priest, and flock; husband, wife, and child—these are to Bonald inseparable triads, formed after the image of the Trinity. And in their inseparability they safeguard the great fundamental principles of authority and order.

By sounding here and sounding there, and everywhere coming upon the same fundamental thought, we have discovered what was the ruling idea of the new period. It may be called by many names. It is the great principle of *externality*, as opposed to that of inward, personal feeling and private investigation; it is the great principle of *theocracy*, of the sovereignty of God, as opposed to the sovereignty of the people; it is the principle of *authority and power*, as opposed to the principles of liberty, of human rights, and of human interdependence. And when we examine the life of the day in all its various developments, we everywhere find the same watchword and the same white flag. The fundamental idea sets its mark upon everything.

In the state it leads to the principle of right being superseded by the principle of might—which goes by the name of divine power, and becomes monarchy by the grace of God. In society it banishes the idea of fraternity, substituting a half-patriarchal, half-tyrannical paternal relation—the idea of equality being simultaneously superseded by that of dependence. In the domain of morality it effaces the inward law and substitutes papal bulls and the decrees of church councils. It does not look upon religion as faith, but as a bond, as the "political fetter" which the Revolutionists had so lately upbraided it with being. It champions in-

dissolubility in marriage and in the state. It teaches that language was a direct gift to man from God, thereby stifling the science of language at its birth in order to erect a theological pyramid above its corpse. It makes real scientific progress impossible by keeping all inquiry and research in the leading-strings of powerful outward authority. It dulls the understanding of the rising generation by entrusting its education to a corps of cultivated, well-bred half-men, sworn to blind obedience to the General of the Jesuit order.

And as this same idea, not long after its first vigorous appearance, attains to the possession of a literature, it soon sets its mark upon fiction, upon lyric poetry, from ballad and song to ode and hymn, nay, even upon the drama. In literature, too, the lily reigns. The new school becomes known as the seraphic school. Its heroes, its typical characters, are martyrs, as in Chateaubriand's writings, or prophets, as in Hugo's and De Vigny's. Its poets seek their inspiration and their points of departure in the Bible and Milton. Authoresses like Madame de Krüdener play the rôle of prophetesses, and as such exercise a distinct influence on the social development of the period. The consecration of the King and the birth of the Crown Prince call forth high-flown and deeply reflective poems from such authors as Hugo and Lamartine. The birth of the Count de Chambord is little less than a miracle, and is celebrated in song throughout the country. Chateaubriand, with the cross in his hands, drives heathen mythology out of fiction ; and with the cross in their hands, Lamartine and Hugo expel it from lyric poetry. On the stage the Knights Templar and the Maccabees (whose acquaintance we made in Zacharias Werner's *Sons of the Vale* and *The Mother of the Maccabees*) make their appearance, the former introduced by Raynouard, the latter by Guiraud. There is not a feeling in the human heart, not a corner of the human mind, and not a branch of literature, upon which this restoration of the spirit of the past does not set its stamp during its day of power.[1]

[1] Bonald, *Théorie du pouvoir*, i.–iii. ; *La législation primitive ; Essai analytique sur les lois naturelles ; Du divorce ;* Barante, *Tableau de la littérature française au 18me siècle ;* Lamennais, *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion ;* Laurent, *Histoire du droit des gens*, xvi.

IV

"LE GÉNIE DU CHRISTIANISME"

CHATEAUBRIAND'S book, *Le Génie du Christianisme*, which originally bore the significant title *Beautés de la Religion Chrétienne*, marks the transition from the first to the second stage of the reaction, because, cold and devoid of real feeling as it is, it is an attempt to vindicate and rehabilitate authority by means of an appeal to sentiment and imagination.

It was a defence of Christianity of a perfectly new species, from the fact that it appealed to imagination, not to faith ; to sentiment, not to reason. It impresses one as being proffered under the conviction that reason was now inimical to Christianity, and that faith no longer existed.

The author, not many years before he wrote this work, had been a free-thinker, indeed a materialist. We have proof of this in some marginal notes in his own handwriting, discovered by Sainte-Beuve in a book which had belonged to him. Alongside of the words : "God, matter, and destiny are one," Chateaubriand has written : "This is my system ; this is what I believe." Alongside of the following sentences : "You say that God has created you free. That is not the point in question. Did he foresee that I should fall, that I should be miserable to all eternity ? Yes, undoubtedly. In that case your God is nothing but a horrible and unreasonable tyrant," we read in the margin : "This objection is irrefutable, and completely demolishes the whole edifice of Christian doctrine. But in any case it is doctrine which no one believes in now."

This is the standpoint of Chateaubriand's youth, but one to which he did not long adhere. He was too much the born doubter to be able to hold firmly to even a negative conviction. What there was of faith in the philosophy of the eighteenth century, namely, its belief in the steady progress of humanity,

was probably what he first rejected, and on the loss of this conviction quickly followed the loss of all the rest. He himself attributes his conversion to the influence of his mother's dying prayer to him to keep to her faith. "I wept and believed," he says.

Himself converted, or half converted, by means of sentiment, he now endeavoured to influence others in the same manner. Although intellectual receptivity for the dogmas of Christianity was no longer to be looked for, it was surely still possible to arouse sympathy with its touching, noble poetry. It was an idea characteristic of both the period and the man, this of transforming the apology for Christianity into æsthetics. He devotes a whole chapter to the sweet, melodious music of the church bells. He describes the simple village church, with its feeling of innocence and peace. He presents us with pictures and symbols when we expect proofs. Bonald remarked that in books which were works of reason, such as his own, truth displayed itself like a king at the head of his army on the day of battle, while in books like Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme* it had more resemblance to a queen on her coronation day, surrounded with everything magnificent and beautiful that could be got together. His meaning is that Chateaubriand aims rather at moving men than at convincing them. In private conversation he expressed himself more bluntly. He said: "I gave my pills as they were; he gave his with sugar."

Certainly no book affords a clearer indication of the want of serious reality in the religious regeneration of the day. Its point of view is that which men have agreed to call the romantic. It is to the past it turns, and as the Romanticist is a man of imagination, he sees the past in an imaginary light. The religion of the Romanticist is a parade religion, a tool for the politician, a lyre for the poet, a symbol for the philosopher, a fashion for the man of the world.

Like the German, the Danish, and, at a later period, the French Romanticists, Chateaubriand loves the mysterious. He begins his vindication of belief in authority by appealing to men's sense of mystery in life generally: "There is nothing beautiful or sweet or great in life that is not mys-

terious. The most wonderful feelings are those which at once move and perplex us. Bashfulness, chaste love, pure friendship, are full of mystery. . . . Is not innocence, which in its essence is nothing but holy ignorance, the most ineffable mystery? Women, the more admirable half of the human race, cannot live without mysteries." The transition from this to the dogmas of a so-called revealed religion strikes us as sudden.

De Maistre makes a somewhat similar use of mystery. When he has shown that such and such a social institution is inexplicable, he believes that he has proved it to be divine. There is, in his opinion, no reasonable explanation for hereditary royalty and hereditary nobility—which is proof sufficient that they exist by the grace of God. What is there to be said in defence of war? Hardly anything, thinks De Maistre; consequently war too is a mystery. A little reflection shows us the necessity of such argument. Authority demands mystery as its counterpart. Note what Michaud says in the dedication of his poem, "An Exile's Spring" (*Le printemps d'un proscrit*), 1803: "Society ought to have its mysterious side as well as religion; I have always thought that we should at times believe in the laws of our country as we believe in the commandments of God. In private as well as in public life there are things which a man does better if he does them without reflecting upon his reason for acting."

The style of Chateaubriand's work is dazzlingly brilliant. But for this it would not have created the sensation it did. It contains descriptions of nature, emotional outbursts, and some few sparsely scattered thoughts of real value. But all that is of genuine value from the literary and poetical point of view is to be found in the tales *Atala* and *René*, which, according to Chateaubriand's original plan, were to have formed chapters of the work—where they would have cut a curious figure among such chapters as those on missionaries and sisters of mercy. They were, preliminarily, esnt out as feelers long before the main work, and they do not concern us now; we have studied them in their historical significance in their proper place.[1]

[1] *Emigrant Literature*, pp. 17, 33.

In *Le Génie du Christianisme* Chateaubriand did not, he has himself told us, endeavour to prove that Christianity is excellent because it comes from God, but that it comes from God because it is excellent.

He shows that men have been wrong in despising Christianity, that it has beautiful, noble, poetic qualities. He does not perceive that, even if he succeeds in proving in many instances the narrowness of view of those Encyclo pedists whom he is continually attacking, this in itself is no manner of proof of the divine origin of religion.

The whole work is in reality an outcome of the dislike and contempt which he had gradually developed for the philosophy and literature of the eighteenth century. The spirit of this philosophy and literature now appeared to him to be fatal to all the higher desires and aspirations of the human soul. The eighteenth century had misunderstood feeling and poetry. Therefore what it had exalted must be condemned, and what it had dared to disdain must be exalted. And for what had it shown greater contempt than for Christianity!

Chateaubriand was not a man of a pious, but of an artistic nature; and he conceived a fruitful artistic idea. Perceiving that the classic period in France had reached the term of its natural life, he contended that the imitation of the works of heathen antiquity ought now to cease. It had gone on, at least in appearance, for not less than 250 years. Poets had neglected national and religious subjects for those of ancient mythology; by the end of the eighteenth century they were not even imitating antiquity, but the seventeenth-century authors of their own country. Now there had been enough of it; now it was time for France to dismiss mythology and have a literature inspired by its own history and its own religion.

In this roundabout way Chateaubriand arrived at his vindication of the beauty of Christianity, and of its superiority in artistic value to any of the heathen religions.

The nature of the vindication evidences the nature of the whole movement which the work inaugurates. Its æsthetic part is preceded by a dogmatic introduction which, in keeping with the rest of the book, aims at proving the

beauty of the dogmas of Christianity. I adduce a few examples of the absurd results of this "how beautiful!" style of reasoning.

Of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper Chateaubriand writes: "We do not know what objections could be offered to a means of grace which evokes such a chain of poetical, moral, historical, and supernatural ideas, a means of grace which, beginning with flowers, youth, and charm, ends with bringing God down to earth to give Himself as spiritual sustenance to man." What objection indeed could be offered? None, if all this be true.

In spite of his æsthetic bias, Chateaubriand sets to work with a good deal of pedantry. Celibacy, as enjoined on the Catholic priesthood, is considered first from the moral point of view, and, thus considered, is denominated the most moral of institutions. A second chapter, with the somewhat comical title: "Virginity, considered from the poetical point of view," is devoted to the same subject. It ends with the following burst of eloquence: "Thus we see that virginity, beginning in the lowest link of the chain of beings (its significance among animals had been taken into consideration), makes its way upwards to man, from man to the angels, and from the angels to God, to lose itself in Him." In the original edition, as if this were not enough, there was added: "God is the great solitary, the eternal celibate of the universe." It is curious that no notice should be taken of His paternal relation to the second person of the Trinity. But this omission makes the appeal to the case of the Saviour the more effective. Chateaubriand says: "The law-giver of Christianity was born of a virgin and died virgin." And to this he adds: "Did he not intend thereby to teach us that the earth, as regarded human beings, was now, both for political and natural reasons, sufficiently populated, and that, far from multiplying the race, we ought rather to restrict its increase?"

We are struck dumb by finding Malthus's theory of population come out as the sum and end of this Christian Romanticism. Who would have believed that there was so much political economy in the Gospels!

On the subject of the Trinity we read: "In nature the number 3 seems to be the number superior to all others; it is not a product; hence Pythagoras calls it the number without a mother. Even in the doctrines of polytheistic religions we here and there come upon a dim intuition of the Trinity. The Graces chose its number as theirs."

Thus in Chateaubriand's imagination the Trinity is upborne by the three Graces as Caryatides. In keeping with this is his attempt to prove the divine origin of the cross from the existence of the constellation, the Southern Cross.

In keeping with his defence of Christian dogma is such a defence of the Christian form of worship as the following: "Speaking generally, we may answer that the rites of Christianity are in the highest degree moral, if for no other reason than that they have been practised by our fathers, that our mothers have watched over our cradles as Christian women, that the Christian religion has chanted its psalms over our parents' coffins and invoked peace upon them in their graves." If argument were required when it is perfectly self-evident that the same defence may be offered for any religion, we might urge that it is a very unsuitable one in this particular case, where the object in view was to induce sons to abjure the anti-Christian beliefs professed by their fathers.

No less droll are the arguments drawn from natural history to prove the love displayed in the order of the universe. Chateaubriand writes: "Is an alligator, is a serpent, is a tiger less loving to its young than a nightingale, a hen, or even a woman? . . . Is it not as wonderful as it is touching to see an alligator build a nest and lay eggs like a hen, and a little monster come out of the shell just like a chicken? How many touching truths are contained in this strange contrast! how it leads us to love the goodness of God!"

Chateaubriand is positively jocose in his attempts to prove the divine purpose evident in nature. He declares that the birds of passage come to us at a season when the earth yields no crops on purpose to be fed; and he maintains that the domestic animals are born with exactly the amount of instinct required to enable us to tame them.

When the Neo-Catholic authors embark on any subject connected with natural science, they at once become extremely comic. Any one interested should read (in his review of Bonald's *La législation primitive*) Chateaubriand's outburst of horror at having heard a little boy answer his teacher's question: What is man? with the words: A mammal. And in the same spirit De Maistre repeatedly asserts that the whole science of chemistry requires to be placed on a different, a religious basis, or declares his conviction that some honest scientist will certainly succeed in proving that it is not the moon, but God, who produces the ebb and flow of the tide, as also that water, which is an element, cannot be resolved into oxygen and hydrogen. He is of opinion that birds are a living proof of the incorrectness of the law of gravitation. In this connection one of the characters in his *Soirées de St. Pétersbourg* remarks that there is more of the supernatural in birds than in other animals, a fact witnessed to by the signal honour shown them in the choice of the dove to represent the Holy Spirit. That alligators should lay eggs, that birds should fly —such feats are miracles in the eyes of the Neo-Catholics.

On the dogmatic part of the work follows the æsthetic, which is the more important. In it Chateaubriand endeavours to prove that "of all the religions which have ever existed, the Christian religion is the most poetical, the most human, the most favourable to freedom, to art, and to literature—that to it the modern world owes everything, from agriculture to the abstract sciences, from asylums for the unfortunate to churches built by Michael Angelo and ornamented by Raphael—that there is nothing more divine than its morality, nothing more beautiful and noble than its dogmas and its rites—that it favours genius, purifies taste, approves and stimulates virtuous passion, invigorates thought, provides poets and artists with the noblest themes, &c., &c."

For two hundred years the great dispute had been going on as to the comparative superiority of the works of ancient and modern literature. It had occupied the minds of Corneille and Racine; it had produced the earliest translations of Greek and Roman poetry; and it had by slow degrees led the modern mind to recover its self-confidence, after the

first overpowering impression of the grandeur of ancient literature had worn off. It was this two hundred years' long discussion which Chateaubriand revived in a new form, namely, as the question of the value of the Christian religion to poetry and the arts, compared with that of the old mythologies. In the most remarkable manner he ignores the fact that the great question in the case of a religion is not whether or in what degree it is poetical, but whether it has the truth on its side or not. Very remarkable, too, are the arguments to which he has recourse to support his assertions! He vaunts, for example, the æsthetic superiority of the Christian hell to the heathen Tartarus. Is it not infinitely grander—"poetry of torture, hymns of flesh and blood"?

He poetically jingles hell's instruments of torture, employs them as æsthetic rattles for the old, dull children of the new century, and brings into fashion a sort of drawing-room Christianity, specially adapted to the requirements of the *blasés* upper classes of France. In the seventeenth century men believed in Christianity, in the eighteenth they renounced and extirpated it, and now, in the nineteenth, the kind of piety was coming into vogue which consisted in looking at it pathetically, gazing at it from the outside, as one looks at an object in a museum, and saying: How poetic! how touching! how beautiful! Fragments from the ruins of monasteries were set up in gardens, with a figure dressed as a hermit guarding them; a gold cross was once more thought a most becoming ornament for a fashionable lady; the audiences at sacred concerts melted into tears. Men were touched by the thought of all the comfort religion affords to the poor and the suffering. They had lost the simple faith of olden days and now clung to externals, to the significance of the Catholic church in literature and art, its influence on society and the state. To make the antiquated principle of authority look young and attractive they painted it with the rouge of sentimental enthusiasm; but they only succeeded in making the principle that had once been so awe-inspiring, ridiculous.

Constant wrote his book on religion in the house of his friend, Madame de Charrière, Chateaubriand wrote his in the companionship of his devoted and intimate friend, Madame

de Beaumont, who assisted him by searching for the quotations he required. His mind does not seem to have been taken up with his work to the exclusion of all mundane thoughts.

We know how grandiloquently Chateaubriand inveighed during Louis XVIII.'s reign against the married priests, in what a bitter spirit he stirred up the royalist and church party against them, how determined he was that they should be deprived of every sou of their pay, to punish them for having taken advantage of the laws of the Republic to marry like other citizens. Yet was not he himself, as the author of *Le Génie du Christianisme* (in the preface to which he writes of himself as "the humble Levite"), a kind of priest, nay, more than a common priest? And was not he married, and that, too, without the aid of a priest? I draw attention to this because it is one of the thousand signs of something that is to be detected everywhere throughout this religious reaction, something to which I believe we are justified in applying, ugly as it is, the word "hypocrisy."

Such, then, is Chateaubriand's book, and such are the circumstances in which it came into being. To its unprecedented success and enormous influence it owes an importance greater than its proper due. It was the book of the moment; it smuggled in, well packed in sentimentality, that principle of authority which was soon to ascend the throne.

V

JOSEPH DE MAISTRE

THE ascension was brought about by a man of a very different stamp.

Count Joseph de Maistre was born at Chambéry in Savoy in 1754. The De Maistre family, which belonged to the highest class of the bureaucracy, had immigrated from France at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In the boy's home his father's severe, imperious spirit, with its strong tone of old-fashioned piety, ruled supreme. Joseph, who was the eldest of ten children, was trained in such absolute obedience that even when he was at the University of Turin he never allowed himself to read a book without first writing to ask his father's permission. From a very early age he was devoted to serious study. He learned seven languages, which is an uncommon thing for a Frenchman to do even now, and was more uncommon then. He entered the civil service, became, like his father before him, a magistrate in his native town and a senator, and married at the age of thirty-two.

Two children had been born to him when the French Revolution broke out and made a complete change in his life. Savoy was incorporated with France, and to remain faithful to his king Joseph de Maistre gave up his home ; he had to choose between becoming a citizen of the French Republic and having all his property confiscated, and he chose without hesitation. For a few years he lived in Switzerland. Here he wrote his first work, *Considérations sur la France* (published anonymously in London in 1797), and made the acquaintance of Madame de Staël. Though he considered that her head had been turned by modern philosophy (in his opinion an inevitable consequence in the

case of any woman), he acknowledged her to be "astonishingly brilliant, especially when she was not trying to be so." They bickered and wrangled, but were none the less good friends.

In 1797, when the King of Sardinia was obliged to leave his continental territories and take refuge on his rocky island, Count de Maistre happened to be in Turin. He fled to Venice, arriving after many hairbreadth escapes, and there he and his family suffered great privations. From 1800 to 1802, as chief magistrate of Sardinia, he laboured hard to improve the slovenly administration of justice which he found prevailing there. In 1802 the deserted king sent him as envoy-extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to St. Petersburg. His acceptance of this appointment obliged him to part from his wife and children, to whom he was tenderly attached. The pay was so miserable that it barely sufficed to cover his own necessary expenses—he could not afford to provide himself with a fur-lined coat. But in Russia, now passing through the most prosperous period of the reign of Alexander II., De Maistre's capacities found scope for development, and this poor ambassador of a petty power succeeded in winning the Emperor's entire confidence. The strength and purity of his character, his pronounced royalist and conservative views, his knowledge, his sagacity, and his wit ensured him a prominent place at a court whose sovereign knew how to appreciate both an uncommon character and remarkable talent.

Although by birth a Piedmontese, and as a diplomatist to a certain extent a cosmopolitan, Joseph de Maistre belongs by his language—and not by that alone—to French literature. All his literary theories were French, and there was much that was French in his intellectual idiosyncrasy. Not only was France always in his eyes the chief power in Europe, and the King of France, as "the most Christian king," the main bulwark of monarchy and Christianity, but he was at heart on the side of France even when it was for his ideas that her enemies were waging war upon her. In spite of everything he rejoiced when Republican France defeated the army of the allied monarchs. For what they

desired was the division of France, the annihilation of its power. "But our descendants, who will think with indifference of our sufferings and dance upon our graves, will make very light of the excesses which we have witnessed and which have preserved undivided the most delectable kingdom after that of heaven." He desires the defeat of the Jacobins, but not the ruin of France, which would be equivalent to the inevitable intellectual relapse of the human race.

In a manner he felt himself to be a Frenchman. All his life long he proclaims, and by his actions proves, himself to be the loyal subject and servant of the King of Sardinia; but, when he is more than usually ill rewarded for his services, the thought strikes him that it was really by a kind of mistake of nature that he was not born a Frenchman. We read in one of his letters (*Correspondance diplomatique*, i. 197): "I cannot get rid of the feeling that, let me do what I will, I am not the man to suit His Majesty. Sometimes in my poetic day-dreams I imagine that nature, carrying me in her apron from Nice to France, tripped on the Alps (a very excusable thing in an old lady) and let me fall into Chambéry. She ought by rights to have gone straight to Paris, or at any rate to have stopped at Turin, where I could have developed properly; but on the 1st of April 1754 the irreparable mistake was made. I discover in myself a certain Gallican element, for which, be it observed, I have all due respect." Thus it is not merely permissible but obligatory to set De Maistre's name first on the list of the men who brought about the powerful reaction in France against the fundamental ideas of the eighteenth century.

His first book, written in 1796, already shows the character of the reaction to which he gives expression, and which he endows with stubborn consistency. While the Revolution is still proceeding, but at the moment when the counter-revolution is beginning to make its influence felt, he eagerly vindicates the two powers which the century had repudiated—belief in the supernatural and fidelity to political tradition.

Maintaining that every nation, like every individual, has its mission to fulfil, he declares that France has guiltily abused the position of authority given to her in Europe. She stood at the head of the religious system, and not without reason were her kings called "the most Christian." As she has used her power to act in direct contradiction to her mission, it can surprise no one that she is being brought back to the right path by terrible chastisements. The French Revolution is marked by *Satanic* traits, which distinguish it from anything ever seen before and possibly from anything that will ever be seen again. Its so-called legislators have issued such a proclamation as this: "The nation supports no religion," words which would almost seem to indicate hatred of the Divine Being.

Even Rousseau, though he was "the most mistaken of men," perceived that it was only a narrow-minded and arrogant philosophy which could suppose the founders of such religions as the Jewish and the Mahometan to be nothing but lucky impostors. Philosophy is a disintegrating, religion alone an organising power. But no religion in the world can be compared with Christianity. It alone, although it is founded upon supernatural facts and is a revelation of incomprehensible dogmas, has been believed for eighteen centuries and been defended by the greatest men of all ages, from Origen to Pascal. Now it has been dethroned and its altars have been overturned. Philosophy reigns triumphant. But if Christianity issues from this ordeal purer and stronger than ever—then, Frenchmen, make way for the most Christian king, place him on his ancient throne, lift high his flaming banner (*oriflamme*), and proclaim that Christ commands, guides, and conquers!

There is no government but theocracy (priestly rule), and every constitution comes from God. A constitution is never the result of a contract, and the laws which rule the nations are never written laws, for those constitutions which are written are never anything but proclamations of older laws, of which all that can be said is that they exist because they exist. The constitution of 1795 is, like earlier revolutionary

constitutions, made for *man*. But there is not such a thing as *man*: "In the course of my life I have seen Frenchmen, Italians, Russians, &c.; I know, too, thanks to Montesquieu, that there are Persians; but *man* I have never met; if he exists, it is contrary to my knowledge." No; when the population, the customs, the religion, the geographical position, the existing political conditions, the good and bad qualities of a nation are known, then a constitution is the solution to the problem of finding the laws suitable for that particular nation.

De Maistre traces the probable course of the counter-revolution. He sagaciously demonstrates the unreasonableness of the supposition that it can only be the outcome of the will of the people. Very possibly a minority of four or five persons, he says, will give France a king. Letters from Paris will announce to the provinces that the country has a king, and the provinces will shout: *Vive le roi!* With his obstinate faith in providence he foretells the restoration (even in its details) at a time when all hopes of such an event seemed indeed to be built upon sand, and in process of so doing exhibits a fascinating combination of excessive enthusiasm for the pre-revolutionary conditions with a practical political sagacity which avoids any overstraining of principle that would make the restoration of these conditions impossible. On the delicate question, whether or not the restoration of the monarchy will entail the return of the national property to its original owners, he expresses himself with a caution which is strikingly at variance with the generally confident, defiant tone of the book. He explains that a revolutionary government is, by its very nature, an unsteady government. Under it nothing is certain. As the ownership of national property is not yet, in the opinion of the general public, free from the reproach originally attaching to it, a government which considered itself in no way debarred from undoing what it had done would in all probability lay hands on this property as soon as it could. "But under a steady, permanent government everything is permanent, so that even for the acquirers of national property

it is important that the monarchy should be restored; they will then know what they have to rely upon." In other words, he has at least so much regard for actual circumstances as to acknowledge that it will not be possible to reign after the Revolution in exactly the same manner as before it.

His fundamental political doctrine is that the state is an organism, that as an organism it possesses real unity, and lives its life by virtue of a far-off past, from which it refreshes itself as from a perennial source, and by virtue of an inward, secret fountain of life. It is not the outcome of discussion and arrangement, but of an unfathomable mystery. Hence a written constitution signifies nothing. It is the soul of the nation which gives the nation unity and permanence, and this soul is the love of the nation for itself and its national memories. France is not thirty millions of human beings living between the Pyrenees and the Rhine, but a thousand millions who have lived there. Our country is nought else but the unity of those who live, those who have lived, and those who will live in the days to come on the same fragment of the earth's surface. The fact that one family is the symbol of the continued existence of this nation leads De Maistre to monarchy.

Sovereignty cannot be divided. Therefore the king does not share his power with the great of the land. These latter have no privileges, but they have duties. They form the king's council; they are guardians of the national unity, inasmuch as they unite the people to the throne, and guardians of the national continuity, inasmuch as they are the sustainers of tradition. It is their duty perpetually to proclaim to the people the benefit of authority, and to the king the benefits of liberty. The law is, as law, the same for all, therefore destitute of the pliability which is a necessity if freedom is to be granted and ensured. An enlightened autocracy secures liberty.

When Bonaparte appears and quickly develops into Napoleon, Joseph de Maistre is, naturally, his implacable enemy. Nevertheless, he recognises the autocrat in him. He feels that the unity of the French nation is embodied

in him, and this though he regards him as the *demonium meridianum* (see *Correspondance diplomatique*, ii. 65). In July 1807 he writes: "In those newspapers which are his organs Bonaparte causes himself to be called the messenger of God. Nothing could be truer. Bonaparte comes straight from heaven . . . as lightning does." In other words, De Maistre saw in the calamities which Napoleon brought upon Europe, as in all "heaven-sent" calamities, judgments, the justice of which did not diminish the guilt of those who executed them. In 1808, out of love for his country, he did violence to his own inclinations by endeavouring to obtain an audience of Napoleon for the purpose of pleading the cause of Sardinia. He took this step not in his capacity of minister, but privately and on his own responsibility. Napoleon, though he did not answer De Maistre's letter (written from St. Petersburg), was evidently impressed by the quality of the man; he ordered the French ambassador at the Russian court to show him favour, and did not take his audacity at all amiss. De Maistre's own court, however, did. It was intimated to him that the Cabinet, to which he had sent immediate notice of the measure taken, had been disagreeably surprised by it. He replies proudly and satirically: "The Cabinet has been surprised! The skies may fall—that is a matter of no consequence—but heaven preserve us from an unexpected idea! I am now more than ever persuaded that I am not the man you want. I can promise you to transact His Majesty's affairs as well as any man, but I cannot promise never to surprise you. That is a weakness in my character which I am incapable of curing." He proved the truth of what he himself somewhere says, that trusting to the constancy of court favour is "like lying down on the wing of a windmill to sleep soundly." When vindicating himself he writes: "I know everything that can be said against Bonaparte; he is a *usurper*, he is a *murderer;* but note well that he is less of a usurper than William of Orange and less of a murderer than Elizabeth of England. . . . As yet we are not stronger than God, and we must come to terms with him to whom it has pleased God to entrust the power" (*Lettres et opuscules*, i. 114).

Joseph de Maistre spent fourteen years of his life as envoy at St. Petersburg. The long separation from the female members of his family was very painful to him, and the cares of a father often weighed heavily on his mind. It is touching to read in one of his letters that when he was lying awake at night, over-tired with work, he often imagined that he heard his youngest little daughter, whom he did not know, crying in Turin.

As a proof of his favour and esteem for De Maistre, the Czar gave commissions in the Russian army to his brother and son. The brother was wounded during the campaign in the Caucasus. The son fought in the war against Napoleon. "No one," writes the father, "knows what war is unless he has a son fighting. I do what I can to banish the thoughts of hewn-off arms and smashed skulls that constantly torment me; then I sup like a youth, sleep like a child, and awake like a man, that is to say, early."

The great panegyrist of the executioner and the *auto da fé* had in private life a very tender heart. His private utterances often convey the impression of kindliness, as his public do of whimsical wit.

He perhaps shows most amiably in his letters to his daughter: "You ask me, dear child, why it is that women are condemned to mediocrity. They are not. They may become great, but it must be in a feminine way. Every creature ought to keep to its own place and not strive after advantages other than those which properly belong to it. I have a dog called Biribi, who is a great amusement to us all; if he were to take it into his head to have himself saddled and bridled to carry me out into the country, I should be as little pleased with him as with your brother's English mare if she were to take it into her head to jump on my knee or to sit down at the breakfast-table with me. The mistakes some women make come from their imagining that in order to rise above the common level they must act like men. . . . If twenty years ago a pretty woman had asked me: 'Do you not believe that a woman is just as capable of being a great general as a man?' I should have answered: 'Most undoubtedly I do, Madam. If you com-

manded an army, the enemy would fall on their knees to you as I do now, and you would enter their capital with drums beating and banners flying.' If she had said to me: 'What is there to prevent my knowing as much of astronomy as Newton?' I should have replied with equal sincerity: 'Nothing whatever, O peerless beauty! You have but to look through the telescope, and the stars will consider it an honour to be gazed at by your beautiful eyes, and will hasten to discover all their mysteries to you.' These are the things we say to women, both in prose and verse; but the woman who takes such speeches seriously is uncommonly stupid." After declaring that woman's mission is to bear and to bring up men, he adds: "But, dear child, I am for moderation in everything. I believe, speaking generally, that women ought not to aim at acquirements which are at variance with their duties, but I am far from thinking that they ought to be perfectly ignorant. I do not wish them to believe that Pekin is in France, or that Alexander the Great proposed marriage to a daughter of Louis XIV." And in a following letter he writes: "I see that you are angry with me for my impertinent attack on learned women. It is absolutely necessary that we should make friends again before Easter. The fact that you have misunderstood me ought to make the process easy. I never said that women were monkeys; I swear to you by all that is most holy that I have always thought them incomparably more beautiful, more amiable, and more useful; but I did say, and this I abide by, that the women who want to be men are monkeys; for wanting to be learned is wanting to be a man. I think that the Holy Spirit has shown His wisdom in arranging things as they are, sad as it may seem. I make my humble obeisance to the young lady you tell me of, who is writing an epic poem, but heaven preserve me from becoming her husband; I should live in terror of seeing her delivered in my house of a tragedy, or possibly even of a farce—for when talent has once set off, there is no knowing where it will stop."

"The best and most convincing observation in your letter is that upon the raw material employed in the creation

of man. Strictly speaking, it is only man who is made of dust and ashes, or, not to mince matters, of dirt, whereas woman was made of a mire that had already been prepared and elevated to the dignity of a rib. *Corpo di Bacco! questo vuol dir molto.* You cannot say too much, my dear child, as far as I am concerned, about the nobility of women, even those of the bourgeois class; to a man there should be nothing more excellent than a woman, just as to a woman, &c., &c. . . . But it is precisely because of the exalted opinion I have of these noble ribs that I become seriously angry when I see any of them desiring to transform themselves into original mire. And now it seems to me that the question is completely disposed of" (*Lettres et opuscules*, i. 145, 156).

It surprises us to find the strictly orthodox Catholic jesting thus lightly with Bible legend; but even in his witty and sportive moods De Maistre is faithful to his reactionary principles. It is one of his characteristics that a certain piquant wit goes hand in hand with the violent, dæmonic energy of his attack, an energy which reveals itself even in the little fact that his favourite expression is *à brûle-pourpoint* (in its literal meaning—to fire with the muzzle of one's pistol upon one's antagonist's coat).

In the *Soirées de St. Pétersbourg*, in which he already writes of Bacon with some of that animosity to which he afterwards gave full vent in a large and erudite work, he makes a humorous observation which is quite in accord with the newest scientific view of the matter: "Bacon was a barometer that announced fine weather, and because he announced it, men believed that it was he who had produced it." And in a letter he writes: "I cannot tell how there came to be this war to the death between me and the late Lord Chancellor Bacon. We have boxed like two Fleet Street boxers, and if he has pulled out some of my hair, I imagine that his wig no longer sits very straight on his head."

When De Maistre is broaching his favourite theories, his humour is often very sarcastic, as, for instance, when he discourses, in the second part of the *Soirées*, on the ways of maintaining *esprit de corps*. There is much cynicism in such

pleasantry as this: "To produce discipline and the feeling of honour in any corps or society, special rewards are of less avail than special punishments." He shows how the idea had occurred to the Romans of making military punishment a privilege—only soldiers had the right to be beaten with rods made of the wood of the vine. No man who was not a soldier might be beaten with such a rod, and no other kind of rod might be used to flog a soldier with. "I cannot understand how some such idea has not occurred to any of our modern rulers. If I were asked for advice on the subject, I should not go back to the vine rod, for slavish imitation is useless. I should suggest laurel rods." He further proposes that a great forcing-house should be erected in the capital, exclusively for the purpose of producing the necessary supply of laurel branches with which the non-commissioned officers are to belabour the backs of the Russian army. This forcing-house is to be under the supervision of a general, who must also be a Knight of St. George of the Second Class at lowest, and whose title is to be "Chief Inspector of the Laurel Forcing-House"; the trees are to be attended to by old pensioners of unblemished character; models of the rods, which must all be exactly alike, are to be kept in a red case at the War Office; each non-commissioned officer is to carry one hanging by a ribbon of St. George from his button-hole; and on the façade of the forcing-house is to be inscribed: This is *my* tree, which brings forth *my* leaves.

De Maistre lived at St. Petersburg in great poverty, which he bore without being humiliated by it. He was distrusted and constantly left in the lurch by his ungrateful court, which did not even repay him the sums that from time to time he was obliged to advance out of his slender means to necessitous fellow-countrymen in Russia. During these years his theories matured and his intellectual idiosyncrasies became more marked. The letters, private as well as diplomatic, which he wrote at this time give us an excellent idea of the spirit and the general conditions prevailing at the court of Alexander I. Those written previous to and during Napoleon's campaign in Russia are especially interesting from the graphic impression they give

of the fears, hopes, panics, and rejoicings produced at that time throughout the Russian empire by war news, whether true or false. At first De Maistre is in great anxiety about the issue of the war. He clearly sees the incompetence of the generals who are appointed to direct the operations against such a leader as the Emperor of the French. But from the moment when it is known how ill-equipped the French army is to face the Russian autumn, not to mention the Russian winter, he is no longer in doubt; he foresees that Napoleon's fall and the restitution of all his conquests—events which he had long regarded as certain to happen sooner or later—are close at hand.

Six of De Maistre's works were written at St. Petersburg. Of these *Du Pape*, *De l'Église Gallicane*, *Examen de la Philosophie de Bacon*, and *Soirées de St. Pétersbourg* are the most important and the most characteristic of their author.

The *Soirées* contain the ideas on the subject of God and the world upon which his theory of the state is based. Anticipating the objection that the authority of his absolute monarchs rests upon no foundation, that they are utterly irresponsible, that, in other words, autocracy is unjust, he meets it with the preliminary general answer that injustice is the law of every society, because it is the law of all life on earth. In nature itself might is right—with the right of the stronger, plants and animals are perpetually destroying one another. And this law: Might is right, is far from losing its validity in the world of man; here also it prevails, as the law of war. War is a perpetually recurring phenomenon in the life of the human race. Except for a few years in each century, it has raged from the most ancient times until now, and it will continue to do so. Human blood will always be flowing upon earth. For the chastisement of heaven is upon man. To this conception of war the military profession owes the high position it holds and always has held. No trade is considered so honourable as that of the soldier. The human race, taken as a whole, is guilty and deserves the scourge of war, unjustly though the punishment may fall in single cases.

It is, then, as the representative of God upon earth that the autocrat is, in the first place, the war-lord, in the second, the possessor of the divine and terrible prerogative of *punishing the guilty*. This prerogative necessarily entails the existence of a man whose profession it is to execute the punishments ordained by human justice. And such a man is always to be found—a strange and inexplicable fact, for our reason is at a loss to discover any motive which can lead a man to choose such a profession. Hence the character who is the mouthpiece of De Maistre's own opinions is inspired with a feeling of awe and reverence by the much misjudged executioner.

According to the general, and, in De Maistre's opinion, entirely justifiable verdict, every soldier, simply as such, is so noble that he ennobles even those actions which are generally regarded as the most degrading ; he may exercise the calling of the executioner without suffering the slightest degradation, so long as he only carries out the sentence of death upon members of his own profession and uses no other instruments for the purpose but its weapons. It is not without its significance that on every page of the Old Testament shines the name, the Lord of Hosts. No action is more inseparably connected in men's minds with honour than the innocent shedding of innocent blood. It is in the very passion of carnage that De Maistre admires the soldier most. Such a thing has never been known as an army refusing to fight. It is an irresistible impulse that drives men onward into battle. And why is this so ? In order that to the end of time there may be fulfilled that law of the violent destruction of living beings which extends throughout creation, from the lowest animal to man.

But although from time immemorial there has been no calling more honourable than that which involves the shedding of innocent blood, a remarkable prejudice has caused the calling of the executioner to be as much disdained as the soldier's is respected.

De Maistre inquires if this man who, in preference to all profitable and honourable callings, has chosen that of torturing and killing his fellow-men, is not really a being of

some peculiar and higher kind. And in his dialogues the Count, who is his own mouthpiece, answers :—

"I myself have no doubt on the subject. Outwardly, he is formed like ourselves ; but he is an abnormal being, and it is only a special act of creative power which can add such a member to the human family. He is like a world in himself. All shun him ; his house stands in a desert place, every one withdrawing as far as possible from the spot where he lives with his mate and his young ones, whose voices are the only cheerful human sounds that fall upon his ear ; but for them he would hear nothing but shrieks of agony. . . . A sinister signal is given. One of the lowest menials of justice knocks at his door and informs him that his services are required ; he sets off ; he arrives at a public place where human beings are crowding together in excited expectancy. A prisoner—a parricide, a committer of sacrilege—is flung at his feet ; he seizes this man, binds him to a cross which is lying on the ground, then raises his arm—the terrible silence that follows is only broken by the sound of the crashing of bones under the blows of the iron mace and the screams of the victim. He unbinds the man ; he carries him to the wheel ; the broken limbs are twined round its spokes, the head hangs down, the hair stands on end, and from the mouth, open like the opening of a glowing furnace, there come at intervals a few broken syllables of entreaty for death. —He has finished his task ; his heart is beating, but it is with pleasure ; he is satisfied with his work ; he says in his heart : No man breaks on the wheel better than I. He comes down from the scaffold and holds out his bloody hand, into which, from as great a distance as possible, the official whose duty it is to pay him flings a few gold pieces, with which he marches off between two rows of human beings who shrink from him with horror. He sits down to table and eats ; he goes to bed and sleeps ; and when he awakes next morning his thoughts run on everything but his occupation of the day before. Is he a man ? Yes. God allows him to enter His temples and accepts his prayer. He is no criminal, and yet in no human language is he called honourable or estimable."

"Nevertheless all greatness, all power, all order depend upon the executioner. He is the terror of human society and the tie that holds it together. Take away this incomprehensible force, and that very moment order is superseded by chaos, thrones fall, and states disappear. God, who is the source of the power of the ruler, is also the source of punishment; He has suspended our world upon these two poles, for the Lord is the Lord of the poles, and round them He sets the world revolving."

And in order that this reverence for the office of the executioner which it is in keeping with his plan to inculcate, and which it entertains him to astound with, may make a proper impression on the reader, De Maistre takes up the subject again in one of the later conversations. He asks what a reasoning being coming from another world to investigate into the conditions prevailing in ours would think of the executioner, and himself gives the answer: "He is an august being, the corner-stone of society. Since crime has undoubtedly taken up its abode upon earth, and since it can only be kept in check by punishment, it is plain that, if the executioner disappeared, all order would disappear with him. And what greatness of soul, what noble disinterestedness must we presume that man to be possessed of who takes upon himself the execution of a task which, though certainly a very honourable one, is most painful and repugnant to human nature, &c."

In these utterances we have at one and the same time the delight in consistency which is to be observed in the earliest nineteenth-century devotees of the principle of authority, the delight in a disconcerting idea which is one of De Maistre's own chief mental characteristics, and the delight in describing suffering which he has in common with Görres and so many of the other champions of the gloomy doctrine of the necessary subjection of humanity to kings and priests.

De Maistre resents hearing men so often talk as if crime went unpunished. What do they mean by this? "For whom are the gallows, the knout, the wheel, and the stake and fagot provided? Surely for the criminal." Justice

may sometimes miscarry, but such exceptions do not alter the rule. It is folly to believe in all the judicial murders one hears talked about. Take the frequently quoted case of Calas. Nothing is more doubtful than his innocence.

The very fact that Voltaire defended him speaks against it.

But given the worst—that an innocent man is deprived of his life—why, it is simply a misfortune like any other. When a guilty man escapes we have another exception and misfortune of the same kind. The events which lead to the discovery of a crime are, however, often so unexpected and improbable that we cannot but believe that human justice is supported by higher aid. And all the time that we are foolishly blaming human justice for having punished an innocent man, nothing is more probable than that he really is guilty, though of some other, unknown crime. Many such cases are on record, the truth coming to light through the confession of the criminals. De Maistre, we observe, understands how to extricate himself from a difficulty.

Something of the same nature holds good in the matter of sickness. Its injustice, too, is only apparent. If every kind of intemperance could be prevented, most, nay, in reality all diseases would be done away with. This inference may be arrived at by arguing as follows: If there were no moral evil in the world there would be no physical evil, and since an infinite number of diseases are direct consequences of certain offences, it is permissible to generalise and say that this holds good of them all.

Everything, then, is ordered upon moral principles. It is undeniable that life is a terrible thing, but this does not prove that God is unjust; he is offended, he is insulted, and to appease his anger blood is required. Man early comprehended his own fall, early understood that it is the innocent who must and alone can, by the transference of merit, atone for the sins of the guilty, that there is no salvation without the shedding of sacrificial blood.

Hence the idea of sacrifice is one of perpetual and keen interest to De Maistre. Sacrifice is ideal slaughter, slaughter the one and only aim of which is the accomplishment of

what is right and meet. From the earliest ages men have offered both animal and human sacrifices; and in Christianity the practice is sanctified and acquires a deeper meaning. Here it is not any chance and possibly guilty individual who is the victim, but a being who is elected to die because of his innocence. This, therefore, is ideal sacrifice.

All this is undoubtedly an offence to reason. But contrariety to reason is the sign and seal of truth. The theory which is the most obviously reasonable is the theory which never stands the test of practice. Nothing could be more obviously reasonable than the whole philosophy of the eighteenth century, with its faith in man and its liberalism. But its very reasonableness bespeaks its superficiality. It satisfies reason; but experience opens men's eyes to its futility. Nothing seems more self-evident than that man is born free. Yet when Rousseau writes: "Man is born free, nevertheless he is everywhere in fetters," he does not notice that he is not only writing nonsense, but distinctly affirming that he is doing so. It would be quite as sensible to say: Sheep are born carnivorous, nevertheless they everywhere live on vegetable food. In the same way, nothing is theoretically more unreasonable than hereditary monarchy. If, without any previous experience, men were called on to choose a government, that man would be thought mad who hesitated to give an elective monarchy the preference over a hereditary one. And yet we know from experience that the latter is the best, the former the worst form of government. In other words, the world, far from being a reasonable world, is full of things that are profoundly at variance with reason.

Christianity, the Christian conception of life, is therefore no new, hitherto unknown conception. It is connected by many links with the whole succession of heathen religions, and is prepared for by them. All the truths of Christianity are foreshadowed in the creeds of heathendom. In heathen sacrificial practices, for instance, we already have the essential idea of sacrifice. And De Maistre waxes wroth over Voltaire's violent, irreligious tirades against

the sacrificial festivals of the old pagans. He is yet more exasperated when, at the end of a description of a sacrifice of both adults and children, he comes upon the words: "However, the sacrifices of the Inquisition, of which we have so often spoken, are a hundred times more execrable."

It is apropos of this utterance that (in his essay *Éclaircissement sur les sacrifices*) De Maistre first takes up the cudgels for the Inquisition, to the defence of which institution he was ere long to devote a special work. He writes: "The passage relating to the Inquisition appears to have been written during an attack of delirium. What! The lawful execution of a small number of human beings, condemned to death by a fully qualified court of justice according to the strict letter of a penal law which had previously been solemnly proclaimed, and which each one of the victims was perfectly free to avoid transgressing—to call such an execution a hundred times more abominable than the horrible act of the parents who cast their children into the flaming arms of Moloch! What wild insanity! What forgetfulness of all reason, all justice, all shame!" De Maistre storms thus because he is here attacking the man who was his opposite, and who fought, like himself, with the weapons of wit and paradox, but wielded them with far greater power.

Founding his theory of the state upon the basis of religion, De Maistre derived the power of the ruler from God. It is from God that kings receive their rights, and to God that they owe duty. It is not the king's power but his duty that is absolute, for it is duty to the Absolute. The rights of the people may be called the duty of the king to God. In the proverb: "The voice of the people is the voice of God," there is this truth, that the rights of the people are the rights of God in His relation to the king. And "the voice of God" is not a mere figure of speech; the living voice of God speaks through the church. The king is responsible to God, and the church is the depositary of divine truth. But the church, as well as the state, is under the rule of an autocrat. As the state means the king, advised and guided by the great men of his

country, so the church means the Pope, advised and guided by cardinals and bishops. The very idea of sovereignty implies that the king is absolute, the Pope infallible. People are not surprised that the captain of a ship should be, as such, an infallible sovereign, should permit no criticism of his orders, should issue unqualified commands and require them to be obeyed blindly; yet they are surprised that in all church matters the Pope should be infallible. They are accustomed to the idea that all the other courts of justice, low and high, are submitted to the jurisdiction of a highest court, the judgments of which are irreversible and may not be criticised; yet they are astonished that the Pope, as head of the church, is infallible. If they had any conception of what sovereignty means, they would not be astonished. A skilful attempt, this of De Maistre's, to prove to laymen the reasonableness of ecclesiastical dogma.

In his book *Du Pape*, which Catholics consider a work of the first importance, he carries his reasoning on ecclesiastical matters to its logical conclusion.

This book was the outcome of the remorse he felt for having, at a trying moment, forgotten the reverence due to the head of the church. When, three years after the conclusion of the Concordat, the Pope went to Paris, at Napoleon's request, to anoint and crown him Emperor, Joseph de Maistre, the ardent royalist, was so incensed that in various letters to his court he used such language in writing of the Holy Father that his *Mémoires et correspondance diplomatique* of these years were published by Cavour in 1858 with the view of depriving the papal power of a spiritual ally. In the course of a few years Napoleon and the Pope quarrelled, and when De Maistre saw the Pope insulted and ill-used by the Emperor, he repented his hasty words, and resolved to make ample reparation.

The fundamental idea of *Du Pape* is that there is no human society without government, no government without sovereignty, and no sovereignty without infallibility. This attribute of infallibility is so indispensable that men are obliged to assume its existence even in secular societies

(where it does not exist) on pain of seeing these societies dissolved. The church lays claim to no more than do the other authorities, although it has this immeasurable advantage over them, that its infallibility is not only taken for granted by man, but also guaranteed by God.

De Maistre writes: "A great and powerful nation has lately, before our own eyes, made the most strenuous efforts in the direction of liberty which the world has ever beheld. What has it gained by these? It has covered itself with ridicule and shame, and has ended by setting a Corsican gendarme on the throne of the kings of France." He shows how the Catholic religion necessarily forbids every kind of revolt, whereas Protestantism, which is a result of the sovereignty of the people, leaves the decision of everything to private feeling—a supposed species of moral instinct. "There is such accordance, such a strong family likeness, such interdependence between the papal and the kingly power that the former has never been shaken without the latter suffering too." As a proof of this he quotes the following utterance of Luther: "Princes are as a rule the greatest fools and the most arrant rogues on the face of the earth; nothing good can be expected from them; they are God's executioners, whom He employs to chastise us." He avers that Protestantism, which has no reverence for royalty, has no respect for marriage: "Had not Luther the audacity to write in his exposition of the book of Genesis (1525) that the example of the patriarchs leaves it an open question whether or not a man may have more than one wife, that the thing is neither sanctioned nor forbidden, and that he, for his part, will not take it upon him to decide one way or other?—edifying doctrine, of which practical application was soon made in the family of the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel." (Luther gave his consent to this prince having two wives at the same time.)

In opposition to Rousseau's doctrine De Maistre maintains that man is by nature a slave, but that Christianity has, in a supernatural manner, emancipated him. For this reason he calls the Christian woman a truly supernatural being. Voltaire he without more ado calls the man "into

whose hands hell has given all its power." And he puts the crowning touch to his work by propounding the following theory: "Monarchy is a *miracle*, and instead of reverencing it as such, we rail against it as tyranny. The soldier who does not kill a man when commanded to do so by his lawful sovereign is not less guilty than he who kills without having received orders to do so." Those states which have introduced Protestantism have been punished by the loss of their monarchs. De Maistre has discovered that the average length of reigns is shorter in Protestant than in Catholic countries. The one inexplicable exception to this rule is provided by Denmark, which is the only Protestant country whose sovereigns live as long after the Reformation as before it. "Denmark appears, from some unknown reason, but doubtless one honourable to the nation, to have been exempted from this law of the shortening of reigns."[1]

The fifth book of the earliest edition of *Du Pape* was afterwards published as a separate work. It is the well-known *De l'Église Gallicane*, a treatise in which De Maistre draws from the doctrine of papal authority conclusions utterly subversive of the claim of the French church to relative independence. On this occasion he assumes an antagonistic and supercilious attitude towards Bossuet, a man for whom he generally has nothing but praise. The special object of his attack and invective is the Church Council held in France in 1682 for the purpose of strictly defining the limits of the Pope's power. He is almost as much incensed against that of 1700, which pronounced Jesuits and Jansenists to be equally blameworthy. It is to a life-long enthusiasm that De Maistre here gives expression. From his youth he had been the devoted friend, admirer, and supporter of the Jesuits. His diplomatic letters from Russia tell of his constant endeavours to be of assistance to them in their difficult position as Roman Catholics in a Greek Catholic country, of his anxiety to shield them when the court is exasperated by their efforts to convert members of the aristocracy, &c., &c. He now, as their champion, attacks Pascal. His attack is not made

[1] *Du Pape*, pp. 160, 174, 383.

from the standpoint of philosophy, as it easily might have been, in so far as their sensible apprehension of the fact that there can be no other morality except morality of intention gives the Jesuits in certain ways the advantage over the man of genius who impeached them. Nor is his defence of the Jesuits conducted altogether from the standpoint of the man of the world, as it might well have been, in so far as the Jesuits, with their modification of principles and their practical indulgence, have followed the prudent rule that it is unwise to alarm and better to have some of the moral law fulfilled by demanding little than none by demanding all. He contents himself with maintaining that the Jesuit treatises on morality attacked by Pascal are obsolete, unread books, which Pascal dragged from their mouldy obscurity with the sole aim of insulting and injuring an order, the strict morality and stern self-discipline of which even its enemies had been forced to admit. Then, by way of variety taking up for a moment the standpoint of the worldling, he remarks humorously: "It is, when we come to think of it, very comical that we worldlings should take upon us to inveigh against the *lax morality* of the Jesuits. This much is certain, that the whole aspect of society would be changed if every member of it acted up even to Escobar's moral standard, and were guilty of no shortcomings other than those excused by him."

It was very natural that the energetic champion of the ideas of the past should, towards the close of his career, make a special effort to clear the reputation of the great, misunderstood, misjudged Inquisition. This he did in his *Letters to a Russian Nobleman on the Subject of the Spanish Inquisition.* In these letters De Maistre says everything that can be said in vindication and in honour of the Inquisition; yet in reading them we are irresistibly reminded of the remark of the old tiger in the *Hitopadesa:* "Nevertheless," says the tiger, "nevertheless, it is difficult to prove the falsehood of the report that tigers eat men." De Maistre shows that many of the assertions made of the Inquisition are incorrect; he proves, for instance, that it was a secular, not an ecclesiastical court of justice. But the only part

of the book that has any attraction for us is that in which he defends its proceedings. He says: "In Spain and Portugal, as elsewhere, every man who lives quietly is unmolested; as to the rash person who attempts to teach others what to believe, or who disturbs public order, he has only himself to blame. . . . The modern propagator of heretical doctrine, haranguing at his ease in his own room, is quite untroubled by the knowledge that Luther's line of argument produced the Thirty Years' War; but the old legislators, who knew the price men might have to pay for these fatal doctrines, most justly punished with death a crime which was capable of shaking society to its foundations and bathing it in blood. . . . It is thanks to the Inquisition that for the last three hundred years there has been more happiness and peace in Spain than anywhere else in Europe."

To the *Letters* De Maistre has prefixed a quotation, which is to the effect that all great men have been intolerant, and that it is right to be so. "Let him who comes across a well-intentioned sovereign," says Grimm, the Encyclopedist, "preach tolerance in matters of faith to him, so that he may fall into the snare, and, by his toleration, give the persecuted party time to recover and prepare itself, when its turn of power comes, to crush its opponent. Voltaire's discourse, with its babble of tolerance, is a discourse only for simpletons and those who allow themselves to be fooled, or for people who have no interest in the matter."

A gross fallacy conceals itself in this argument. Every genuine, overpowering enthusiasm naturally makes tolerance impossible. Yet Voltaire's doctrine is none the less valid because of this. The difficulty is easy of solution. The principle of intolerance is the theoretical, that of tolerance the practical, principle. In theory no consideration, no toleration, no mercy! For error must be crushed and torn asunder, follies must be blown from the cannon's mouth, and lies flayed alive. But what about the liar, and the fool, and the erring one? Are they also to be hewn asunder, or flayed alive, or blown from the cannon's mouth? They

are to go their way. The domain of real life is the domain of tolerance.

De Maistre's *Examen de la philosophie de Bacon* was not published until after its author's death. It is the most disputatious and tedious of his works, and one in which the combative champion of Christianity is plainly grappling with a subject that is beyond his powers. He desired to confute Bacon because he believed that the ungodliness of the French philosophy of the eighteenth century was entirely to be ascribed to his influence ; and he falls upon him with positive theological fury, attacking all his theories—his theory of consciousness, of nature, of light, of the weather, of the soul, of religion ; attacking him where he is right, and where, for once in a way, he is wrong ; finding him out in immaterial and merely superficial inconsistencies ; pointing out defects in his Latin and in his taste ; fighting in a noisy, violent, dogmatic manner, with weapons drawn from the arsenals of supernaturalism and tradition. In single chapters, such as that on *Causes Finales,* he displays a certain futile acuteness ; in others, such as that entitled *Union de la Religion et de la Science,* cold-blooded fanaticism. In this latter chapter we read : "Science undoubtedly has its value, but it is necessary that it should be kept within bounds. . . . It has been very aptly said that science resembles fire : confined to the hearths which are destined to receive it, it is man's most useful and powerful servant ; left to the hazard of chance, it is a terrible scourge."

Faithful to his rule of allowing no stain to cling to the shield or sword of the church, he vehemently maintains (contradicting an assertion of Bacon's French translator) that the church has never opposed the progress of natural science. The translator had plainly affirmed that nothing had injured the church more than the clear demonstration of the truth of certain facts which it had long denied, and the proclaimers of which it had actually persecuted ; and he had named Galileo as an example. After lauding the church as the patron of science in other cases, and trying as far as possible to explain away the case of Galileo, De Maistre is

forced to make an admission. And this is how he does it: "Galileo was condemned by the Inquisition, that is to say, by a court liable to err like any other, and which in this case actually was mistaken regarding the main point at issue; but Galileo in numberless ways damaged his own cause, and by his own repeated indiscretions brought upon himself a humiliation which he might easily, and without dishonour, have avoided. . . . If he had kept his promise not to write, if he had not been determined to find proof in Holy Scripture of the truth of the Copernican theory, if he had even written in Latin instead of unsettling the public mind by employing the vulgar tongue, nothing would have happened to him."

To the end De Maistre was true to his character; he would not yield a foot of the ground that had been lost centuries before.[1]

He is a great and fascinating personality, this successful advocate of a lost cause, which unmistakably gained ground during his lifetime. As the upholder of authority, of monarchy, and of the gloomy view of life, as the disputant, as the knight of Christianity, and as the scorner of science, he has a faint resemblance to Kierkegaard. But his system is an edifice of ideas relating to the outer, Kierkegaard's one of ideas relating to the inner, world.

De Maistre is the thoroughly convinced and vehement, yet cold-hearted champion of the principle of authority. There is heart in his letters, but there is none in his books. In them there is nothing but heated argument, propounded with much subtlety of logic and pungency of wit. In his sarcasm he often reminds us of Voltaire, and his grim delight in horrors at times recalls Swift. It gives him pleasure to astonish and to irritate. He loves paradox, because it makes him feel his superiority, because it perplexes the reader, and because it makes attack difficult, paradox being a redoubt which one can without dishonour evacuate before the assault.

[1] Joseph de Maistre, *Considérations sur la France; Lettres et opuscules*, i., ii., *Correspondance diplomatique*, i., ii.; *Soirées de St. Pétersbourg*, i., ii.; *Du Pape; De l'Église Gallicane; Examen de la philosophie de Bacon*, i., ii.; Margerée, *Le Comte J. de Maistre;* E. Faguet, *Politiques et moralistes du 19me siècle.*

His Christianity is an entirely external thing. He is a Christian as a man is a Protectionist or a Free-trader, on grounds of general theoretical conviction. His Christianity is a Christianity without brotherly love—nay, it is a Christianity without Christ as saviour and reconciler. In it Christ is only the sanguinary sacrifice demanded by the offended Deity—like Iphigenia or Jephthah's daughter. Faguet has aptly said that De Maistre's Christianity is "fear, passive obedience, and state religion." It is a Christianity which does not originate in Jerusalem, but in Rome; and he himself "is something in the nature of an officer of the Pope's bodyguard."

The most ardent assailant of the spirit and philosophy of the eighteenth century, the century in which he was born, has this in common with it, that he is destitute of the proper apprehension of history. He would fain ignore the eighteenth century, just as it was fain to ignore the Middle Ages. He is the counterpart of the woman who represented the goddess of reason—he is the man who represents the principle of authority pure and simple, without any historical qualification. And at heart he is as devoid of religious feeling as the century which he attacks in the name of revealed religion.

Hard and cold, with a sarcastic and at times a cruel expression on his countenance, but noble in character and strong of will, he stands at the threshold of the new century like—if not the good, at least the best spirit of the great, universal reaction. There is no possibility of confusing him with the dwarfish figures who during the course of the century have diluted his ideas, taken the sap and strength out of his thoughts, and torn and twisted his doctrines in order to oppress and dissemble under cover of them. Joseph de Maistre was a mind, these others have only been bodies. He was a man without baseness and without hypocrisy, a colonel of the Papal Zouaves as *littérateur*, the most soldier-like and the most attractive figure which the reactionary camp of the century has to show.

VI

BONALD

SIDE by side with Joseph de Maistre stands Bonald, the famous medieval schoolmaster of the European reaction, a man with the same bent of mind and the same practical aims, but as monotonous as De Maistre is versatile, as conventional as De Maistre is wittily fantastic.

Louis Gabriel Ambroise, Vicomte de Bonald, was born in 1754 (the same year as De Maistre) at Monna, in the south of France. He began life as an officer in Louis XV.'s musketeers. During the first stage of the Revolution he favoured liberal ideas, but only for a short time. He married early, and was made chief magistrate of the Department of Aveyron, an appointment which he resigned when Louis XVI. found himself obliged to consent to the subjection of the clergy to the secular laws. In 1791 he emigrated, and joined the army of the Prince of Condé. He wrote his *Théorie du Pouvoir* at Heidelberg. The police of the Directory destroyed almost the whole first edition of this book, but a copy which had been sent to Bonaparte luckily reached its destination and made such a favourable impression on the great man that he removed its author's name from the list of exiles. Not unprofitably had Bonald taught that every revolution is begun by the subject but ended by the ruler, that it begins because the authorities have been weak and have yielded, and ends because they have recovered strength. He had shown that all disturbance only serves to strengthen authority, and prophesied that the Revolution, which had begun with the declaration of the rights of man, would end with the declaration of the rights of God. These latter being the very rights which Bonaparte, by means of his Concordat, was now proclaiming, Bonald's position was assured. He remained

devotedly attached to the Bourbons, but was content to dream of them in an appointment conferred on him by the Emperor. He was made *conseiller tutélaire* of the University, with a salary of 12,000 francs a year for doing nothing. Chateaubriand reviewed his books with reverent admiration. De Maistre wrote to him after the publication of his *Recherches Philosophiques:* "Is it conceivable that nature has amused herself by tuning two strings until they are in as perfect harmony with each other as your mind and mine? If certain manuscripts of mine are ever printed, you will find in them almost the same expressions you yourself have used, and yet I certainly have altered nothing." In another letter he expresses himself even more strongly: "I have thought nothing which you have not written, and written nothing which you have not thought." Bonald felt himself flattered by these assertions, though he doubted their truth—and this with good reason, for, similar as are the results arrived at by these comrades-in-arms, there is little resemblance between their mental processes.

A proof of the high estimation in which Bonald was held is to be found in the touching letter in which Napoleon's brother, Louis, King of Holland, entreats him to undertake the education of his eldest son. Louis begins by telling what a complete invalid he himself is, how dearly he loves his son, how imperative it is that this son should be educated by a man, in the fullest acceptation of that word, in order that he too may become one. Then he says: "Although I do not know you personally, my investigations have led me to the conclusion that you are one of the men whom I esteem most highly. Therefore you will pardon me that now, when I have to choose the person to whom I must entrust what is more to me than life, I apply to you. If the happiness which you doubtless enjoy in a peaceful home has not made you indifferent to the service you are capable of rendering—I do not say to me, a single individual, but to a whole nation which is even more deserving than it is unfortunate (and that is saying much)—you will consent to become my son's tutor." And he concludes in the same strain, defending himself against slanders which he imagines may have reached

Bonald's ears. With such humility did a king appeal to this man—and in vain ; he refused the request.

A still more remarkable instance may be adduced of the importance at that time attributed to the influence of a determined upholder of authority of Bonald's calibre. One day Bonald received a note requesting him to call upon Cardinal Maury, an ecclesiastic whose position under the Empire was a very different one from that of the days when he argued in the National Assembly against the civic rights of the Jews. When they were alone, the Cardinal asked Bonald what his answer would be if the Emperor requested him to undertake the education of the King of Rome. For a moment Bonald was silent, astonished by the honour shown him. He then gave, it is said, the discouraging answer: "I confess that, if I ever taught him to rule, it would be in any place but Rome." After the restoration of the monarchy no one did more than Bonald to ensure that Rome and its spirit, the principle of authority, should rule in place of being ruled. All his life long he had opposed the liberty of the press. He attained to the position of its censor.

In 1815 he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, where he sat on the extreme Right. Under Louis XVIII. he was made a member of the Academy and a peer of France, in which latter capacity he obstinately opposed liberty of religion and liberty of the press. In 1830 he retired from public life because it was against his conscience to swear allegiance to the monarchy of July.

Any one taking up Bonald's works directly after De Maistre's will have difficulty in wading through them. For nearly all of them are deadly dull. There are no human beings in his books, nothing but doctrines, and Bonald's doctrines consist of theologico-political propositions, which we are required to accept without proof. One cannot imagine a mind with a more implicit belief in dogmas, that is to say, a mind which more entirely ignores realities and scientific thought. He seems never to have doubted. Never once during his long career as an author does it appear to have entered his mind to question any one of the few simple fundamental principles on which he bases his theories.

These principles are to be found in his works in a petrified form—speaking exactly, in the form of triads. Like the scholastics of the Middle Ages before him, like Hegel after him, Bonald thinks in triads, only he thinks without any perception of the two-sidedness of ideas, without flexibility, without inspiration. All relations are by him reduced to the great triad of cause, means, and effect. In the state we have power as the cause, ministers as the means, and subjects as the effect. In the religious world we have the triad—God, Jesus the Mediator, and man. In another acceptation Jesus is himself power, minister, and subject—power by his thought, minister by his word, subject as sacrifice. In the political sense, too, he is power, minister, and subject—power as King of the Jews, minister as priest, subject as the submissive martyr.

In the family, in society, in the state, in the universe, the same tri-unity is demonstrated ; and all this is done with the aim of proving the necessity and the truth of monarchy. Monarchy is a true thing because it is founded on the principle by which the world is ordered. The universe is monarchic. Hence revolutionists and republicans, who have dared for the moment to abolish monarchy, have actually been making the bold attempt to overturn the order of the universe. It is not *a* constitution which they have abolished, but *the* constitution, for there is only one.

Bonald jeers at the witness of experience, scorns that of history—the lessons of experience are without significance to him who is in possession of the eternal, fundamental principles. Even natural history he will have nothing to do with, because in it he perceives the idea of evolution, which is of the evil one.

There is no such thing as historical evolution ; there is historical tradition, and it is to this we must cling. For by means of tradition we reach God. In the chain of blind men which we call humanity only the first blind man requires a staff, and this staff is the commandment of God, which is transmitted by tradition.

The eighteenth century had placed more faith than any of its precursors in man's conscious capacity of invention

and production. Rousseau maintained that it was man who invented and founded society. Bonald contests this theory. Man, he says, has invented nothing; he no more invented the family or society than he invented speech or writing. He was in the beginning the blank page, the *tabula rasa*, of which Condillac and the Sensationalists romanced—this blank page has not been filled with the impressions of the senses, but with the direct instructions of God.

For God was not merely the creator "in the beginning"; he continues to create to this very day. He founded society, and founded it that it might preserve his words and his thoughts. But this it can only do by preserving tradition unbroken.

The intention, the mission of tradition, then, is to keep God in the world. Hence every attempt to break with tradition is an attempt at spiritual suicide. And the endeavour to preserve tradition is simply aspiration after the full pulsation of life. A tenacious clinging to the purest spiritual inheritance produces the purest, fullest life. Therefore Bonald clings to the dogmas and to the supremacy of the Roman Catholic church.

In order to vindicate the doctrine of creation and continued creative acts in every domain of nature, he is obliged to prove the same immutability in the universe of which he is the advocate in politics; hence from the year 1800 onwards he is perpetually attacking what was a comparatively new thing in those days, the doctrine of evolution. Like Voltaire before him and Disraeli after him, he makes merry over the idea of man being descended from a fish.

With love and understanding, but with a persistently flattering pen, Bonald describes the government of France under kings like Henry IV. and regents like Richelieu. In his turn attacking the revolutionary assailants of the old monarchy and its nobles, he skilfully argues that the monarchy was not the despotism nor the aristocracy the exclusive caste which their detractors made them out to have been. He shrewdly points out the defects of the succeeding system, with its much boasted liberty for every one, which

meant no more than that every one had a right to vote, and warmly defends the advantages of the old order of things, which permitted the rich man to become a nobleman, but set limits to plutocracy by prohibiting the nobleman's working to become rich. He wilfully overlooks the fact that the original advantages of the old monarchy existed at last only on paper, and that under its auspices the most shameful injustice and the basest cupidity grew up and prospered.

In his aversion to the independence of parliaments and courts of justice, to liberty of conscience and liberty of the press, Bonald is doubtless sincere enough, but in his eulogies of the old form of government there is a want of common honesty. As a historian he is ignorant, but not so ignorant as not to know what that government really was.

His writings are now not only antiquated but decayed. Open his long treatises where we will, a faint odour of dust and musty leaves and corruption meets us. The most important chapters in the once famous *Recherches Philosophiques* (such as those on the origin of speech and writing) read like fragments of some old theological text-book.

As a general rule the shorter treatises and occasional articles of philosophers of Bonald's type retain most freshness. But one can read through the two thick volumes which Bonald published under the title of *Mélanges littéraires et politiques* without coming upon a single page to which the word "fresh" can be applied. Even such essays as those on the writings of Voltaire, on the Jews, and on tolerance, topics which might have been expected to tempt him to say something strong or bitter—at any rate something which would imprint itself on the memory—are terribly monotonous and colourless. Whether he is disapproving of Voltaire's morality, or maintaining that the Jews ought to be deprived of civic rights, or proving that tolerance is a vice and an impossibility, we have always the same solemn and empty ceremonial, the same application of the formula of cause, means, and effect, the same grave, monotonous tempo—one, two, three ; one, two, three. Bonald is unreadable because of the very passionlessness on which he prided himself.

The only one among his books which still attracts readers,

and that simply because of its occasional flashes of passionate enthusiasm, is the famous *Du Divorce*, undoubtedly the most entertaining of them all.

It begins with a long jeremiad on the sad condition of the world since authority was overthrown. Modern philosophy, which originated in Greece, among that people who remained children to the end, and who ever sought wisdom by other paths than those of reason (*sic!*), began by atheistically or deistically (!) denying God. Now, Hume and Condillac, with their doctrine that all our knowledge is derived from the impressions of the senses, have turned man, who is "a reasonable being, served by his organs," into an animal pure and simple, an ordinary product of nature. The universal dissolving tendency has penetrated into family life, and instead of the old relation between parents and children—authority and submission—we have the spirit of revolt in the young hearts and ideas of equality in the young brains; the children regard themselves as the equals of their parents, actually permitting themselves to address them as "thou"; the parents, conscious of their own weakness, no longer dare to assert their authority, but try to become their children's "friends" or "confidants"—only too frequently their accomplices.

The enervated conception of life is imaged in an equally enervated conception of death. It has been proposed to preserve the ashes of the departed in glass or porcelain urns, and, horrible to relate! a mother has actually been permitted by the authorities to burn the corpse of her daughter in heathen fashion. There has been universal agitation for the abolition of capital punishment, that precious institution, *ce premier moyen de conservation de la société*, and in some countries it is already abolished. Governments have had attacks of "the sudden madness which goes by the name of philanthropy." The so-called natural sciences ("so-called" is amusing), which ought really to be styled the material sciences, because they treat of the material world alone, have ousted the higher, the intellectual sciences, beginning with that of metaphysics, so renowned in days of old. In poetry noble tragedy has had to make way for the light and

humorous style. In fiction, which so clearly mirrors the spirit of an age, love used always to be sacrificed to duty. Now the reverse is the case ; and it is Rousseau who has written the novel "which more than any other has misled the imagination and corrupted the hearts of women," namely, *La nouvelle Héloïse*. The principle of authority has been overthrown even in the art of gardening. "The rural uncultivatedness of the English garden has taken the place of the symmetrical splendour of the art of Le Nôtre."

In view of all this endeavour to dissolve society, Bonald makes his attempt to save it. It is a special institution which he aims at rescuing. Society is founded upon marriage, stands or falls with that. The Revolution has made divorce lawful. But where divorce is possible, marriage no longer exists. Therefore every possible effort must be made to procure the repeal of the law of divorce. The effort was made, and was only too successful.

Let us hear what Bonald's theory is.

He maintains (as usual) that a properly developed reasoning faculty reduces all relations to the triad of ideas—cause, means, and effect—the most universally applicable which reason can evolve. These ideas lie at the foundation of every judgment, and form the basis of all social order. Every society consists of three distinct personages, who may be termed the social personages. Reason perceives in God, who wills, the first *cause;* in the man who executes God's will, the *means*, or minister, or mediator ; and in the order of things which goes by the name of society, the *effect* which is produced by the will of God and the action of man. But the reason which argues thus exists, in Bonald's opinion, only in conjunction with the Catholic religion. He says : "Religion, which places God at the head of society, gives man an exalted idea of his own dignity and a strong feeling of independence, whilst philosophy, which assigns the highest place to man himself, is always grovelling at the feet of some idol or other—in Asia at Mahomet's, in Europe at Luther's, Rousseau's, or Voltaire's." (*Du Divorce*, 42.)

We observe that Bonald calmly classes Luther with anti-Christians like Mahomet and Voltaire. All the Catholic

authors of the period do this, and also insist on the affinity between Protestantism and immorality. When De Maistre is discoursing on the Reformation he asserts with the utmost gravity that one half of Europe changed its religion in order that a dissolute monk might be enabled to marry a nun. In his *Théorie du Pouvoir* (ii. 305) Bonald writes: "A choleric, sensual monk reformed religion in Germany; a voluptuous, cruel king reformed it in England. . . . It is significant that the Reformation was supported in Germany by the Landgrave of Hesse, who was desirous to marry Margarethe von Saale whilst his first wife still lived; in England by Henry VIII., who wished to divorce Katharine of Arragon in order to marry Anne Boleyn; and in France by Margaret of Navarre, a princess of more than doubtful morals. Divorce was the ruin of the West as polygamy had been of the East." In his Essay on English Literature (*Œuvres*, vi. 75) Chateaubriand, touching on Luther's marriage, writes: "He married for two reasons—to show a good example, and to deliver himself from temptation. The man who has transgressed laws always tries to draw his weak brethren after him, that he may shield himself behind numbers; he flatters himself that the acquiescence of many will lead men to believe in the propriety and rectitude of acts which were often only the result of accident or passion. Sacred vows were doubly violated—Luther married a nun."

These violent outbursts against Luther and Lutheranism are explained by the fact that the French reactionaries, like the German Romanticists, clearly perceived that the modern intellectual tendency of which they were so much afraid was the inevitable result of Protestantism. Lamennais, for example, writes (*Essai sur l'indifférence*): "It is now acknowledged that the church and its dogmas rest upon authority, as upon an impregnable rock. Hence it is that the adherents of all the different sects, who disagree upon every other point, unite in the attempt to undermine this main pillar of all truth. Lutheran, Socinian, Deist, Atheist, are the names which mark the gradual development of the one doctrine; one and all with unflagging perseverance pursue their particular plan of attack on authority."

Reason, then, Catholic reason, the alone genuine, sees everywhere (according to Bonald) the three social personages—power, minister, and subject. In the different domains of society they receive different names. In the religious world they are called God, priest, and flock; in the political, king, aristocracy or official class, subjects or people; in domestic life, father, mother, and child.

The reader who is not yet familiar with Bonald's mode of thought is likely to be taken aback by this last idea; but Bonald is so perfectly serious in his identification of the father with power, the mother with the minister, and the child with the subject, that he actually, as a rule, employs the designations father, mother, and child in place of the others; because, he says, they apply to animals as well as to man, whereas power, minister, and subject apply exclusively to thinking beings. Besides, he elsewhere says, we must do our utmost to spiritualise man and his relations in view of the attempts that are made to degrade them.

He introduces his theory with his customary formulæ. Man and woman, he says, both exist; but their manner of existence is not the same. They are like each other, but not equals. The union of the sexes is the object of the difference between them. The production of a human being is the object of their union. The father is strong, the child weak; the father active, the child inactive. The mother forms the connecting link. How so? The father, says Bonald, is a conscious being, and cannot become a father except with his own will; the mother, on the contrary, may, even with full consciousness, become a mother *against her will* (hence inactively). The child neither wills to be born nor is conscious of being born.

It is, thus, upon that revolting and tragic arrangement of nature which permits a woman to become a mother against her will that Bonald bases the difference in rank of the sexes. He says, moreover (*Du Divorce*, fifth edition, p. 71): "In this gradation of their relationship is to be found the solution of the question of divorce," namely, that it ought not to be allowed.

If Bonald's mad theory, like many another equally

mad, had simply remained a theory, which no one dreamt of putting into practice, there would be nothing to resent. But it was upon the principles proclaimed in his work that the laws of marriage and divorce which held good in France for the next seventy years were based![1] Immediately after the restoration of the Bourbons (twelve years after the publication of *Du Divorce*) Bonald's influence was so irresistible that the lethargic, religiously disposed National Assembly abolished divorce by an overwhelming majority—236 to 11 votes.

It may be said, proceeds Bonald, writing of education, that the father is the power which, through the mother as minister or means, performs the reproductive and maintaining acts, which have the child as object or "subject."

The relation of man and woman in marriage is simply this: Man is power (*le pouvoir*), woman is duty (*le devoir*). Does not Holy Scripture itself call man woman's head (or reason), woman man's helpmeet (or minister), and signify that the child is the subject by perpetually inculcating obedience as its duty?

Woman resembles man as man resembles God. Man is created in the image of God, but is not because of this his equal. Woman is made of the flesh and blood of man, but is his inferior. Bonald's theory chimes in with Milton's: "He for God only, she for God in him." (*Paradise Lost*, Book IV.) He says: "The society of the family is a society to which the man contributes the protecting power of strength, the woman the necessities of weakness; he *le pouvoir*, she *le devoir*." Thus does the French philosopher caricature the doctrine of St. Paul, which, in its day, was a great and noble advance in the direction of the emancipation of woman.

What, then, is Bonald's definition of marriage? Marriage is the engagement entered into by two persons of opposite sexes to found a society—the society which is called a family. It is this engagement which distinguishes marriage from every other species of cohabitation of man and woman. Bonald refers with the utmost indignation to

[1] Louis de Viel-Castel, *Histoire de la Restauration*, iv. 487.

Condorcet's witty saying, that if men have any duty towards the beings who do not yet exist, it cannot be that of endowing them with existence. "Indeed it is!" he exclaims. "Marriage exists for the express purpose of continuing the race." But we are not therefore to conclude, maintains Bonald, that a childless marriage, that is to say, a marriage which appears to have failed in accomplishing its purpose, may be dissolved; for, by annulling the first marriage in order to legalise a second, the production of children in the first is made impossible, without their production in the second being positively ensured. Though a husband and wife have no children, there is always a possibility that children may come; and since marriage is only instituted for the sake of the possible children, the fact that they as yet have none is no reason for annulling it. To Bonald marriage is the possible society, to which the family, as the real society, corresponds. "*The object of marriage*," he teaches, "*is not the happiness of the wedded pair.*" What, then, is its object? "*Marriage*," he answers, "*exists for the sake of society.*" In marriage religion and the state see only the duties which it imposes.

But if marriage exists only for the sake of society, what, we eagerly ask, is the aim of society? True to his theological dogma, that society by preserving its tradition, *i.e.* itself, preserves nothing less than God, Bonald answers (as indeed he must) with the empty formula: *The aim of society is its own preservation.*[1]

Not a word does he waste upon the vain supposition that institutions exist for man's sake; not a thought does he bestow on human happiness, on the development of the race, or the evolution of human greatness.

The one and only vital consideration being the production and welfare of children, polygamy, the putting away of a wife, and divorce seem to Bonald all equally reprehensible. He remarks that the introduction of divorce and the introduction of polygamy seem to follow naturally one on the other, seeing that Luther (this story appears in every single book

[1] "La société a pour parvenir à sa fin, *qui est sa conservation*, des lois" (*Du Divorce*, 107).

of our period), who permitted divorce, also, though in all secrecy, countenanced the bigamy of the Landgrave of Hesse. Bonald declares that he sees no difference between the polygamy which consists in having several wives at the same time and that which consists in having them one after the other ; he forgets that he hereby pronounces a second marriage, after the death of husband or wife, to be as culpable as marriage after divorce. Everywhere, he declares, where divorce is legal, and where, consequently, a woman is entitled to see in every man a possible husband, the women are devoid of chastity, or at any rate of modesty. He instances England as an example—England. He compares the state of matters in that country, where in given cases divorce is permitted, with the conditions prevailing among certain savage races, where the husband obliges his wife's lover, when he catches him *in flagranti delicto*, to pay for a pig, which the three roast and eat in company. England, with its comparatively liberal institutions, is Bonald's and Lamennais' scapegoat. Lamennais says of England that nowhere else is there to be found a population as blunted, as destitute of the sense of morality, of higher ideas, of everything that elevates the mind and ennobles human life.[1]

All this is exaggeration, and of a most untruthful and illogical kind. But there is both logic and truth in what gives these details their significance, namely, Bonald's conception of the close connection between the question of divorce and the whole political question. He sees that a republic or *democracy* (the Republic is so obnoxious to him that he will not even use the word) inevitably leads to the loosening of the marriage tie.

He writes: "In 1792 divorce was legalised. No one was surprised, for this was one of the inevitable and long-foreseen consequences of the process of demolition carried on at that time with such ardour ; but now, when our desire is to re-build, now, divorce entering as a principle into the edifice of society, shakes that edifice to its very foundations. Divorce was in harmony with the democracy which has too long ruled in France under different names and forms. In

[1] *Progrès de la révolution et de la guerre contre l'église*, p. 35.

domestic as well as in public affairs power was delivered over to the passions of *the subjects;* there was disorder in the family and disorder in the state; there was similarity and harmony between the two disorders. But it is plain to every one that divorce is directly at variance with the spirit of the hereditary and indissoluble monarchy. If we retain divorce, we have order in the state and disorder in the family—indissolubility here, dissolubility there, hence no harmony. On that side to which man is inclined to bend, the law must prop him up; in our days it must forbid disorganised natures disorganisation, as in olden days it forbade half-savage barbarians cruel and bloody vengeance."

Thus Bonald succeeds in resting his theory of marriage upon his fundamental principle of sovereignty by the grace of God. The conclusion he arrives at is that divorce ought to be unconditionally prohibited, and that simple separation without permission to marry again is a sufficient remedy for the ills arising from unfortunate marriages. When his theories became laws, the marriage laws of France, they produced a state of matters in that country which excited the ridicule of the whole world—a state of matters which, for example, made it impossible for a young girl whose bridegroom ran off with her dowry on the wedding day ever to marry again or have lawful offspring. In the case of incendiaries and murderers the law permitted the plea of extenuating circumstances; they might be set at liberty after behaving well for a certain number of years; but, according to Bonald's doctrine and the laws of France, the deserted, victimised young girl had not the same hope of liberty that was extended to the girl who had burned a whole family in their beds or murdered her own father.

The scheme for a code of civil law prepared by the Convention contained the following clauses:—

In the matter of marriage men are free to act as they please, that is to say, marriage comes under the category of matters of conscience.

It is the formation of an alliance in which man and woman stand on an equal footing.

The contracting parties are free to determine the conditions of their union.

Husband and wife have or exercise equal rights as regards the disposal of their property.

Divorce is permissible if desired by both or by one of the spouses.

The law forbids any limitation of the right of divorce.

It appears that the great liberty in the matter of divorce thus suddenly bestowed was, like all suddenly acquired liberty, abused at first. Both men and women, without bestowing much thought on their children, recklessly gave way to ephemeral passions which had neither the justification nor the dignity of true love. Corresponding phenomena are to be found throughout all history, wherever fetters have been broken. But for those who, like Bonald, had no faith in liberty and believed in no disciplining power except that of restraint, what occurred sufficiently proved the necessity of returning to the old order of things.

The ideal marriage (an ideal which will never be lost sight of and which is sometimes realised) is, of course, that in which the two united human beings love each other till death, nay, with a love that lasts beyond death. But this ideal marriage is the result of a rare, fortunate choice, not of compulsory laws.

For such laws the children formed the natural pretext. Bonald propounds his doctrine of the rights of the child in the following effective, admirably expressed proposition: "As the contract of marriage concerns three persons, the father, the mother, and the child, it cannot be annulled because two agree in desiring that it should be. Since the child is under age, society defends its cause against its parents, and as the child's advocate protests against the dissolubility of marriage." This argument premises, in the first place, that the continuance of the marriage at all costs is what is undoubtedly best for the child, a premise which is distinctly open to doubt. In the second place, it presupposes the welfare of the child to be the one vital and all-important matter, a presupposition which only adherents of the principle of authority can be expected to accept without proof. And

lastly, it takes account only of the children born in wedlock, regarding the others as non-existent, though it is well known that one of the saddest results of the traditional order of things is that not all children are born with equal claims upon their parents, nor, consequently, upon society. Bonald's social order, in which the welfare of the child is declared to be of supreme importance, has in our day led to more than 2,800,000 French men and women being born as illegitimate children, in an undeserved inferiority to their parents which is more strongly insisted on in France than in other countries.

But, absurd in many of its details as Bonald's theory is, it is valuable, nay, precious, as being in all its main features a consistent application of the principle of authority in the domain of the family. Bonald has, what semi-liberals never have, a keen perception of the connection between the political and the social principles of the Revolution. He is not able, like those whose very essence is foolish inconsistency, to separate the former from the latter, and to overlook the fact that the traditional theory of marriage, which is still in part the accepted one, is most intimately connected with the traditional theory of the state, which is now generally rejected.

The connection becomes obvious whenever the matter is discussed. The American slave-owners defended themselves against the accusations of the abolitionists by declaring that the relations existing between slaves and their masters were in no respect vitally different from those existing in the family and in marriage. We see, too, that quite as much has been said and written against the permissibility of divorce in any case whatever as would be said and written to-day against a proposal to increase the facility of divorce, or, indeed, against any change in the received conception of what makes the union of man and woman desirable.

In this province, as in every other, the principle of authority has as its opponent the principle of free thought —in various forms. If we leave the socialistic theories (which we shall consider later in connection with the Saint-Simonists) altogether out of the question, we find authority confronted in the matter under discussion by free thought in

the shape of the principle of individualism, as developed by English, French, and American thinkers. The code of laws drafted by the Convention, from which extracts have been given above, is based on this principle, the fundamental idea of which is that it is not, as is generally maintained, the family, but the individual human being who is the main pillar of society, and that this individual is sovereign. The doctrine of the sovereignty of God, as proclaimed by the devotees of hereditary autocracy, and the ambiguous doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, as proclaimed by the revolutionary worshippers of the majority, are superseded by the doctrine of *the sovereignty of the individual* (an expression first employed by the American writer Samuel Warren, from whom it was borrowed by John Stuart Mill).[1] Sovereignty of the individual ensures, as the phrase implies, the absolute liberty of every human being—prohibits any man's usurping any authority or control whatever over other men. The adherents of this doctrine say: *Either* tutelage for every one, *i.e.* censorship of the press, a regular police-spy system, passports, tariffs, prohibition of divorce, laws regulating the intercourse of the sexes—the whole system of arbitrary restriction of the freedom of the individual, *or* the sovereignty of the individual, *i.e.* liberty of the press, liberty of speech, liberty to travel, free-trade, liberty of research, and liberty in the relations of the sexes. From their standpoint the only possible vindication of a law which restricts the liberty of the individual is that the provisional compulsory order of things is merely the speediest means of arriving at a more perfect order of things with more complete liberty—for liberty is the ideal of individualism. The thinkers of this school regard the interference of the state in matters of the affections as unwarranted; they maintain that the legal tie which keeps two beings of opposite sexes united is *either superfluous*—when it is their own wish to remain united, *or revolting*—when it is not their wish. They hold that society acts most criminally towards a married couple, one of whom detests the other, if it obliges them to remain together and bring children into being, the fruit of the desire of the one and the

[1] John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography*, p. 256.

loathing of the other. They consider it revolting that society should compel a woman against her will to bear a child to a drunkard, a child which from its birth possesses its father's depraved instincts and lusts. And they consider it equally terrible that a man's whole life should be sacrificed to a connection which reduces him to despair. They take as much thought of the children yet unborn as Bonald does of those already in existence. They do not, like him, see in the fact that it is possible for a woman to become a mother against her will a proof of the imperfection of woman, but a proof of the uncivilised condition of society. Clearly perceiving the interdependence of all the different provinces of human life, they maintain it to be most improbable that one alone of these provinces should be, by means of tradition, absolutely rightly ordered, seeing that the ordering of all the others has been found to be altogether wrong and has consequently been completely changed in the course of the last hundred years. Such is the line of argument most frequently employed by writers of this school.[1] In this case, as in many others, it is doubtful if pure liberalism points out the right way of arriving at the desired end. The principle is stated here simply as being the direct opposite of that of authority. What is undoubtedly desirable, in this as in every other case, is absolute liberty of investigation.

If a thinker in a Catholic country expresses his opinion freely on the subject of the mass, or any other of the prescribed rites and practices of the church, he is, as a rule, dubbed a scorner of religion in general, if not an atheist. For the orthodox Catholic believes that "religion" consists in, or at least can only exist in combination with, certain ecclesiastical traditions and customs with which in his consciousness it has always been associated. It never occurs to him that the assailant of these customs may have a far nobler and purer conception of religion than himself. He has observed that those whom he has hitherto found wanting in respect for the ordinances of religion have been disorderly, immoral men, capable of all kinds of foolish

[1] See, for example, Stephen Pearl Andrews, *Love, Marriage, and Divorce* (New York); also Émile de Girardin, *L'homme et la femme.*

actions. From this he too quickly draws a general conclusion ; his intellect is not sufficiently developed to enable him to distinguish between the different types of assailants ; he confuses the earnest thinker and champion of a higher truth with the common rabble of graceless scoffers—confuses his superior with his inferiors.

The very same thing happens in the matter of the traditional conception of the proper relation of the sexes. The rules and regulations of this relation in a given country at a given time are no more marriage than Catholicism in Spain in the eighteenth century is religion. Some men are below the standard presupposed by the institution of marriage as it exists, some are above it, whilst the majority in civilised countries exactly come up to it, bring public opinion into harmony with their views, and, confounding the two groups of those who think otherwise, hold them up together to public scorn.

The same idea which leads to the assertion of the principle of authority in religion and in the state leads to its assertion in the matter of the relation of the sexes.

The mistake as regards religion consists in the supposition that the church, because its mission for centuries has been to ennoble, is of essential importance in the production of nobler feelings and thoughts—the supposition that love of truth is not natural to man, increasing with his general development, but must be communicated to him and kept up in him by the perpetual agency of bishops, priests, churches, church councils, &c.

The corresponding mistake in the matter of the mutual relations of man and woman lies in the belief that human beings do not by nature love order and refinement in this relation, and love it the more the more highly developed and consequently refined they are, that men do not instinctively love their children and protect their children's mother, but that all these qualities and virtues must be first manufactured, then preserved in the human soul by the aid of legislation—although the requisite laws are, strangely enough, only produced by the combined action of all those persons who, taken separately, are supposed

to be devoid of the qualities and virtues in question. Entirely the opposite of this is the real truth ; it is only their love of these same virtues and blessings which induces men patiently to submit to all the artificial arrangements and compulsory rules under which they groan. They submit because it has been impressed on them from their childhood that such institutions as the existing ones are the only guarantee for the maintenance of the virtues and benefits they so highly prize.

One result of this state of matters is the repression or complete prevention of all unprejudiced inquiry into the nature and working of the human soul ; men are trained to accept unquestioningly as truth everything that bears the warrant of tradition or authority, and the opponents of the principle of authority are accused of desiring and favouring immorality.

If a man set himself seriously to ascertain what in our day is the most degrading and stultifying of all the principles that exist upon this earth, he could not avoid arriving at the conclusion that the principle of authority is the one most deserving of this unenviable distinction.

The principle of authority consistently applied produces such axioms as: Marriage exists for the sake of society, and the object of society is to preserve itself, or—the same thing differently put: Marriage in its traditional form is sacred, because it is indispensable to the preservation of pure morality. And in what does pure morality consist? In the preservation of marriage in its traditional form.

There is no progress possible on these lines. We go round in a ring without moving from the spot.

But if, on the contrary, the opponents of the principle of authority insist: The object of society is the greatest happiness of its members, and the object of marriage the welfare of the family, we are left free to find out what this welfare and this greatest happiness are. And if they further say : " Moral purity consists in that species of relation between beings of opposite sexes which conduces most to their development and mutual happiness, taking the farthest off as well as the immediate results of the union into consideration," this

definition, supposing it to be accepted or put to the test of experiment, leaves such freedom for thorough and scientific investigation into all that concerns the health of the body, of the soul, and of society as has never before been known.

Order and refinement! These were the watchwords of the champions of the principle of authority. By all means let us have order and refinement—but what men have had to learn, and what they will learn even though it should take them centuries, is that order and refinement are the work of science or natural development, and never are or can be the work of arbitrary legislation, or of a criminal code and a public opinion founded upon tradition and authority. There is no real ordering, no real order of society but that which is the result of scientific insight into the nature of man. All societies—the society called the family as well as that called the state—exist, not for their own sake, but for the sake of men, for the purpose of enabling each individual composing them to attain certain great aims and great benefits. Such aims and benefits are personal development, moral purity, the education of the young, the protection of women.

If these objects can only be attained in the manner indicated by the principle of authority, then of course liberty, in so many other domains regarded as a blessing, is in these domains to be regarded as a curse, and is to be attacked and exterminated. But if they can *possibly* be attained in other ways, possibly be attained *better* in other ways (and such a possibility is difficult to disprove), if, finally, the measure of attainment arrived at in the traditional manner is hardly worth taking into account, then absolutely free inquiry, without regard to human or superhuman authority, is man's bounden duty. In a century such as that in which we live the principle of authority, as the principle which prevents all free inquiry, is the worst, the most stupid, and the most degrading that can be imagined, and stands self-condemned. The man who, by deriding or forbidding free investigation into any social question whatsoever, prevents, as he undoubtedly does, the suggestion of hypotheses and the trying of practical experiments which might prove to be of value to his fellow-men, is a criminal,

for whom, if there were equity and justice upon earth, no punishment would be considered too severe. It unfortunately happens that the majority of educated men are criminals of this class, so that the prospect of having them punished is very slight.

Bonald was such a criminal; but in his outward circumstances we can find no trace of the pursuit of an avenging Nemesis. He lived to the age of eighty-six, and was all his life one of the most influential and respected men of his period. He died in 1840, full of days and of honour.

VII

CHATEAUBRIAND

THERE was no poetry in France under the Empire. Chateaubriand was doubtless an author with great poetic gifts, but Napoleon was the one poet in the grand style. Chateaubriand who hated him, felt this. He writes (in the fourth part of his *Mémoires*): "A marvellous power of imagination inspired this cold politician; but for his muse he would not have been what he was. His intellect carried out his poetic ideas." The long succession of his wars, victories, and defeats was a great Iliad, the Russian campaign a giant tragedy, with which none written at a desk could compare.

Even in the days of the Revolution, for kindred reasons, poetry had disappeared. A few poets still wrote tragedies in the old style; only they transformed Voltaire's philosophical tragedy into political tragedy, exploiting the republics of Rome and Greece for the benefit of the new French Republic, which discovered the prototypes of its heroes in the men whom it called the sansculottes of Rome and Athens. But the interest of these plays could not compare with the interest of the great dramas of the National Assembly and the Convention. Just as in ancient days the gladiatorial combats destroyed men's appreciation of plays in which no one was really killed, now the fifth acts of tragedies seemed flat and stale in comparison with the concluding scenes in the meetings of the Convention, during which the vanquished were led off to the scaffold. The dagger of Melpomene could not, in the long run, compete with the guillotine. Who by means of a poetical work could produce an emotion at all corresponding to what the audience felt on the occasion of the impeachment, sentence, and death of the King and Queen? Who could devise stage plots to compare with Robespierre's and Danton's

plots against Vergniaud and the Girondists, or the snares that were afterwards laid for Robespierre? We have evidence that this was the feeling of contemporaries. Ducis, the famous translator of Shakespeare, replies to a friend who has been urging him to write for the theatre: "Do not talk to me of tragedies! We have tragedies in every street. I have but to put my foot out at the door to step into blood up to the ankles." That there is not much exaggeration in these words is proved by a letter written by Chaumette in 1793 to the municipal authorities of Paris, in which he complains that short-sighted persons were constantly exposed to the unpleasantness of stepping into human blood.

Under Napoleon there is another circumstance to be taken into account, namely, that France had a master. When an author attempted any slight deviation from the beaten track, he was promptly checked. Take Raynouard for an example. His play, *Les États de Blois*, which had been performed at St. Cloud, was prohibited in Paris by express order of the Emperor. It was the cannon's turn to speak. The great cannon in front of the Invalides, which was constantly thundering out the intelligence of a new victory, drowned every other voice. And all the hearts full of youthful enthusiasm, all the ardent souls that at another time would have vented their ardour in poetry, all those who were most warmly attached to liberty and to the ideas of the Revolution, crowded to the colours, and endeavoured to forget their longing for liberty and poetry in the intoxication of martial glory. Intellectual life was extinguished as a sweet song sung in a room is stopped by the incessant rattling of heavy carts through the street. A couple of anecdotes may serve to illustrate the noisiness and the depression. To the question, "What do you think at this time?" Sièyes replied, "I do not think." To the question, "What have you done under the Empire for your convictions?" General Lafayette replied, "I have remained standing upright."

Two of the arts were susceptible of inspiration by the spirit of the time—the art of the painter and the art of the actor. Gérard painted the battle of Austerlitz, Gros the plague scenes at Jaffa, the battle of Aboukir, and the

battle of the Pyramids. Talma, who, as he himself tells, learned for the first time one evening when he was in company with the leaders of the Girondists to understand and to represent Roman Republicans, not as they exist in the imagination of school-boys, but as men—Talma learned from Napoleon to play the parts of Cæsars and of kings. After the historically famous performance, Bonaparte employed Talma to instruct him in the art of assuming imperial attitudes. The real truth is the reverse of this. It was from Napoleon that Talma learned the authoritative deportment, the short, commanding tone, the imperious gestures which he then reproduced on the stage. When, in 1826, the great actor lay consumed with raging fever, he carefully examined in a mirror the traces of madness and terror on his own face, and, half mad at the time, struck himself on the forehead and cried: "Now I have it! If I ever act again, I shall do exactly this when I play the part of Charles VI." Thus passionately did this man love his art. But from his sick-bed he was not to rise again.

One branch of literature alone acquired an influence which it had not before possessed—the youngest of all the branches, which had hitherto been of no importance, but which soon became a power—the newspaper. The well-known *Journal des Débats* was started to begin the attack upon Voltaire and to provide the prevailing ideas of the day with an organ. The French clerical press employed every possible means to attain its end. In exactly the same spirit which led it, after the Franco-Prussian war, to dub Voltaire "the miserable Prussian," it now searched his letters for passages which might convict him of treachery to his country. In one of the letters to the King of Prussia the great Frenchman's detractors discovered the offensive phrase: "Every time I write to Your Majesty I tremble as our regiments did at Rossbach;" and they hoped with the aid of quotations such as this to irritate the victor of Jena with the philosophers of the school of Voltaire. They emphasised the fact that, according to the testimony of contemporaries, the principal cause of the faintheartedness shown by the French army in the war with Frederick was the fanatic

admiration of its officers for that king, a feeling which actually prevented their believing in the possibility of defeating a general who shared and favoured the convictions by which they themselves were inspired. In place of drawing an inference from this favourable to the convictions or ideas in question, the clerical party drew one unfavourable to the persons who, like Voltaire, had promulgated these ideas in France; they denounced them as traitors to their country. The following utterance of the editor of the *Journal des Débats* gives us some notion of the general tone of that paper: "When I say the philosophy of the eighteenth century, I mean everything that is false in legislation, morals, and politics." The Neo-Catholics had another newspaper entirely in their hands, the *Mercure de France*, the most notable contributors to which were Chateaubriand and Bonald. The authors who formed the remnant of the army of the eighteenth century attempted to combat the influence of these powerful journals, but with little success.

In former days the whole energy of the contending parties had been expended in winning over the reading public, or the nation, to their respective sides; now the desire of both was to win the favour of the mighty potentate. The *Journal des Débats* endeavoured to stir up the Emperor's wrath against "philosophy." "The philosophers" tried to infuriate him with the *Journal des Débats*. The clerical party denounced the philosophers as destroyers by profession, who, as such, must inevitably hate Napoleon, the great master-builder. The philosophers accused the clericals of intending, as soon as the Emperor's building was completed, to hand over the keys of it to another.

The future showed that the philosophers were right. The adherents of the Neo-Catholic school were and remained closely attached to the old royal family. Their mode of procedure was to praise Delille because he was in disgrace, and Chateaubriand because, by resigning his appointment after the execution of the Duke of Enghien, he proved himself to be an enemy of tyranny. They drew men's attention to all the good points of the old régime under pretext of writing history.

Napoleon, who kept a keen eye upon journalistic literature, at last lost patience. A written communication has been preserved which was put into the hands of one of the Emperor's officials, to be by him transmitted to Fiévée, the publisher of the *Mercure* (a man with whom the Emperor sometimes corresponded privately). Every word in this paper is significant; note particularly the change from the impersonal third to the first person singular. There is no direct indication as to who is the writer of the document; in the beginning it is that indefinite, anonymous being, the Government, that speaks; then all at once we feel who is wielding the pen—the lion shows his claws. "Monsieur de Lavalette will go to Monsieur Fiévée and say to him that in the *Journal des Débats*, which is read with more attention than the other newspapers, because it has ten times as large a circulation, articles have been found, written in a spirit altogether favourable to the Bourbons, consequently with complete indifference to the welfare of the state; say that it has been determined to suppress any articles in this paper that are too ill-affected; that the system pursued is undoubtedly a system of long-suffering; that it is, however, not enough that they should not be directly hostile; that the Government has the right to demand that they shall be entirely devoted to the reigning house, and that they shall not suffer but oppose everything which can add lustre to the cause of the Bourbons or evoke reminiscences favourable to them; that as yet no decisive step has been determined on; that the inclination is to permit the *Journal des Débats* to continue to appear if men are presented to *me* in whom *I* can have confidence, and to whom *I* can entrust the editorship of the paper."[1]

We observe the direction which events were taking. During the course of the Emperor's reign Neo-Catholicism lost ever more and more of that favour which it at first enjoyed, and not until the return of the Bourbons did it once more completely triumph. Immediately after the accession of Napoleon, Chateaubriand, Bonald, and De Maistre have full liberty to write, the *Journal des Débats* is

[1] Nettement, *Histoire de la littérature française sous la Restauration*, i. 100.

encouraged to undertake its crusade against the philosophy of the eighteenth century, the Pope visits Napoleon in Paris, all honour is shown to the clergy, Frayssinous preaches where and what he pleases. During the last years of the Empire the leaders of the Catholic party are compelled to be silent, the *Journal des Débats* is suppressed, the Pope is a prisoner, the clergy are in deep disgrace, and Frayssinous may not preach at all.—Not until the monarchy was restored was there a rehabilitation of ecclesiasticism, a confirmation of what had been begun by the Concordat.

It has been said, and said with truth, that no real poetry was written under the rule of Napoleon; nevertheless an attempt, and by no means an insignificant attempt, was made at this time to give to the France of the nineteenth century what Voltaire in his *Henriade* had attempted to give to the France of the eighteenth—neither more nor less than a great national epic.

It cannot be denied that the task was a tolerably hopeless one. At a time when all Europe was resounding with the names of the heroes of the new empire, and Napoleon was, as has been said, "binding the open wounds of France with the flags of her enemies," when the doings of the day were throwing all the doings of times past into the shade, where was an author to find a hero for an epic or deeds that would enthral the reading world?

The enterprise was undertaken by no less a man than Chateaubriand, the successful initiator of the literary movement of the period, the most admired author of his day. It was not only inclination but also a certain feeling of duty which induced Chateaubriand to undertake a great epic work. In his first work he had maintained that the legends of Christianity infinitely surpassed in beauty those of heathen mythology; that they appealed far more strongly to the poet; that the Christian, as father, husband, lover, bride, was more admirable and of more value to art than the mere natural being. He felt obliged to follow up his rule with an example, his theory with proof; and for this reason, and also to show what he was capable of, he determined to write a Christian epic.

True to the intellectual tendency of which he had been the first distinguished exponent, he did not choose modern or active heroes, in fact did not choose heroes at all, but martyrs as his theme. They also give the name to his work, *Les Martyrs ou le Triomphe de la Religion Chrétienne*, which, written as it is in prose, produces more the effect of an ordinary two-volume novel than of an epic. To understand this choice of subject we must remember that the point of view of the men of this school was not really that of the Empire at all, but that of the returned *émigrés*. They had not yet recovered from the horror excited in them by the deeds of the Revolution. In the leaders of the Revolution they saw only men of blood, in the vanquished party only hapless victims. In their eyes the real hero was not the conqueror, not the adventurous soldier, but Louis XVI., the innocent sufferer. What were they if not martyrs, all those Christian priests who in the Days of September were murdered for the sake of their religion, all those men and women who died in La Vendée for their loyalty to the King by the grace of God! Victims as innocent as the Princesse de Lamballe, or the maidens of Verdun, or the lately executed Duke of Enghien, were heroines and heroes a thousand times more worthy to be sung than the men who were defiling themselves with blood on all the battle-fields of Europe.

In 1802 Chateaubriand conceived the idea of his epic; in 1806 the first cantos were ready for publication. But the events of the epic were to happen in all parts of the world known to the Romans. Chateaubriand was not indolent by nature; it was not his aim to finish the work as quickly as possible in order to rest upon his laurels. He stopped short, and in July 1806 went off to travel in Greece, Syria, Egypt, and Carthaginian Africa, returning through Spain. The one object of this tour was, he himself gives us to understand in the prefaces to *Les Martyrs* and the *Notes of Travel* (*Itinéraire*), the perfecting of his work. In the one preface we read: "This journey was undertaken for the sole purpose of seeing and paint-

ing those districts in which I intended to lay the scenes of *Les Martyrs*"; in the other: "I did not undertake this journey in order to describe it. I had a purpose, and that purpose I have accomplished in *Les Martyrs;* I went in quest of pictures—that was all."

No, that was not all—neither all that Chateaubriand proposed to himself in taking the journey, nor even all that he wished others to see in it. Chateaubriand is Childe Harold before the real Childe Harold; he is a legitimist and Roman Catholic Byron. His René is the forerunner of the Byronic heroes; he himself, in his pilgrimages, is a forerunner of that half-fictitious, half-real Harold whom love of adventure and longing for new impressions drive from land to land. But the Byron of the ecclesiastical revival could not, like the English nobleman who still felt the blood of the Vikings in his veins, rest satisfied with the honest confession of such a simple motive as this for his wanderings. It would not have been at all in the spirit of Chateaubriand's period, nor would it have been in keeping with the part he played in that period, for him to go to Jerusalem to study landscape, to cover his palette with colours, and fill his sketch-book with sketches. When Childe Harold talks of his pilgrimage, he employs the word in its secondary meaning. Chateaubriand uses it in its original meaning. He tells every one that he is going to the Holy Land to strengthen his faith by the sight of all the holy places. He brings back with him water from the Jordan, and when the Comte de Chambord is born it is with this water that the royal infant is baptized. He himself says: "It may seem strange nowadays to speak of sacred vows and pilgrimages, but in this matter, as every one knows, I have no feeling of shame; I long ago took my place in the ranks of the superstitious and weak-minded. I am perhaps the last Frenchman who will set out for the Holy Land with the ideas, aims, and feelings of a medieval pilgrim. And though I do not possess the virtues which so conspicuously distinguished the De Coucys, De Nesles, De Chatillons, and De Montforts, I have at least their faith; by this sign even the old crusaders would recognise me as one of themselves."

There is an awkward discrepancy between this utterance

and the words quoted above: "I went in quest of imagery—that was all." And in Chateaubriand's *Mémoires d'outre-tombe* we find a confession of yet another object in his quest of pictures, which throws a curious light upon the feelings and motives of the would-be pilgrim. He hoped by his efforts after fame, by his studies and his travels, to win the favour of a lady with whom he was in love. Taken in itself this is most natural. Chateaubriand was an ardent lover and frantically ambitious. It is not surprising that he should have said to himself: Fame, greater, more deserved, that I may deserve her better, that I may show her my ardent desire to render myself worthy of her favour! The lady herself appears to have been ambitious for him, and to have allowed him to view the possession of herself as a possible, far-off reward of new efforts. Though we may acknowledge that there is something medieval and chivalrous in such a relationship as this, an extraordinary confusion of ideas is none the less proved in the man who talks of a crusade and a pilgrimage. And yet Chateaubriand was no priestly casuist; he was a haughty, self-important, cynical aristocrat, who defiantly attached the colours of the church to his helmet and wore them not only at every joust but at every rendezvous.

In his *Mémoires d'outre-tombe* he writes: "But have I in my *Itinéraire* really told everything about that voyage on which I embarked from the port of Desdemona and Othello? Was it in the spirit of repentance that I sought the sepulchre of Christ? *One single thought* consumed me; I counted the moments with impatience. Standing on the deck of my ship, with my eyes fixed on the evening star, I prayed for a fair wind to carry me swiftly onwards, for fame—in order that I might be loved. I hoped to win fame in Sparta, at Mount Zion, at Memphis, at Carthage, and to carry it with me to the Alhambra. Would another remember me with as great steadfastness as mine under my probation? . . . If I secretly enjoy a moment's happiness, it is disturbed by memories of those days of seduction, of enchantment, of madness."

This is the language of a modern Tannhäuser, looking back with longing to his Venusberg. Chateaubriand has evidently forgotten that he had attributed to himself the

emotions and aims of a medieval pilgrim. The lady who had given him a rendezvous at the Alhambra was a young Madame de Mouchy, who died insane. Contemporaries represent her as a marvel of beauty, charm, and refinement. Chateaubriand had been married since 1792. His marriage was undoubtedly a rash and foolish one, but, as the ardent champion of Christian morality, he ought to have considered himself bound by it, regardless of circumstances. In his *Mémoires* he tells how it came about: "The negotiations were entered into without my knowledge. I had not seen Mademoiselle de Lavigne more than three or four times. . . . I did not feel myself at all fitted to be a husband. All my illusions were still strong; nothing was exhausted in me; the vigour of life had been redoubled in me by my travels. I was constantly tormented by my muse. My sister had a high opinion of Mademoiselle de Lavigne, and saw in this marriage an independent position for me. Arrange it, then, said I. As a public man I am not to be influenced, but in private life I am the prey of any one that chooses to take possession of me; to avoid an hour's annoyance I could let myself be made a slave for half a century." Fortunately, he did not feel himself a slave.

In the rôle of the returned pilgrim, then, he wrote his epic. An epic in the nineteenth century! In our days no one believes in the possibility of such a thing. A clearer comprehension than that possessed by any former age of the historical conditions which went to the production of the great national epics of antiquity has convinced us of the vanity of endeavouring in modern times to rival works of the freshness of the *Iliad* or the naïveté (in spite of a high degree of culture) of the *Odyssey*. Just as little as it would occur to any real poet to-day to imitate the *Vedas*, the *Psalms of David*, or the *Voluspa*, would it occur to him to attempt to compete with the immortal works in which, late in the morning of their days, nations, childlike and yet mature, have told the story of their gods and of their heroes—as the Greeks have done in their national epics, the Germans in the *Nibelungenlied*, and the Finns in *Kalevala*. The epics which, like Virgil's and Tasso's, Camoens', Klopstock's, and Voltaire's, are con-

scious, laboured imitations of these old popular works, and which have transformed the miraculous element in them into dead epic machinery, have never taken rank with their models; their comparative value depends upon how close, in time and in spirit, they are to these models. The more naïveté they display, the colder they leave us. The epic poems written in modern times which have not been failures—Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*, or Mickiewicz's *Herr Thaddäus*—have entirely dispensed with the appurtenances of the old epic. But this Chateaubriand had not the slightest intention of doing. Far from it—he rather meant to add to their number, in order to exhibit the vast superiority of the Christian to the antique apparatus.

As he has no command of verse, he determines to write his epic in prose; but, great master of prose as he is, we know in anticipation how he will grope after a style. And we are sensible, as we read, of a confusion of influences—Homer, the Revelation of St. John, Dante and Milton, the Fathers of the Church and Suetonius. The action takes place in the days of Diocletian; one half of the characters are pagans, the other half Christians. The hero, Eudore, wins the heart of a young pagan girl; he converts her, and they die together as martyrs in the arena of the Colosseum. Her father is a Greek priest of the Homeric gods. Some of the events happen in ancient Gaul.

His imitation of the Homeric style has led the author into much artificiality and exaggeration. In the first place he has made his Greeks too religious. They show the same childlike faith in their gods as do those Homeric heroes from whom they are separated by the space of eleven centuries. The Greeks of the age of Eudore were for the most part confirmed sceptics, and those who still believed in their gods did it in a rationalistic manner. Chateaubriand's Greek maiden comes upon Eudore in the forest, while he is resting under a tree. He is young and handsome. He rises hurriedly when he sees her. "Are not you the hunter Endymion?" she stammers confusedly. "And you," asks the young man in his turn, "are not you an angel?" These are not simply polite speeches; the speakers mean what they say. In Chateau-

briand's pages it is the most simple matter possible for two lovers living in the most enlightened country in the world to take each other for legendary characters and supernatural beings. Cymodocée's father says in the same style to the young man: "Prithee, my guest, forgive my frankness; I have ever yielded obedience to truth, *the daughter of Saturn* and the mother of virtue." Even as far back as the days of Plato a Greek was perfectly capable of naming truth without mentioning either its parents or the grandparents of virtue.

We come upon phrases which might have been translated from Homer. When Cymodocée wants to find out who Eudore is, she says: "In what harbours has your ship cast anchor? Do you come from Tyre, famed for the wealth of its merchants? or from beautiful Corinth, after receiving precious gifts from your hosts?" &c.

This sort of thing is passable in dialogue, but the effect is distressing when the narrator himself either altogether forgets the 1500 years which separate him from the characters of the story, and writes as they speak, or else employs expressions borrowed from the medieval romances of chivalry. He writes, for instance, in Homeric style: Nothing would have disturbed the happiness of Démodocus, if he could only have found a husband for his daughter who would have treated her with proper consideration *after leading her home to a house full of treasures.* And of Velléda, the Gallican Druidess, we are told, in the true ballad style: *Fille de roi a moins de beauté, de noblesse et de grandeur.*

And if the author sometimes writes as if he himself were the last of the Homeridæ, his characters in retaliation often talk as if they foresaw the whole course of modern intellectual development. The Christian bishop, Cyrille, speaking of the heathen myths, says: "A time will perhaps come when these falsehoods of the childish days of old will simply be ingenious fables, themes for the song of the poet. But in our days they confuse men's minds." What an enlightened man!

It is unnecessary to pass the whole work in review. The author's great ability is only displayed in details and incidental episodes. One beautiful passage is that in which he describes the arrival of the Greek family to visit the Christian

family, who are all in the field, binding sheaves; it has a peculiar, idyllic charm which recalls the Book of Ruth, and yet it breathes the New Testament spirit. The account of Velléda's death is also very fine. There is all the fire and divine frenzy of Chateaubriand, the poet's, genius in his representation of Velléda.

There are longer passages than these well worthy of attention, such as the description of the battle between the Franks and the combined armies of the Romans and the Gauls, which, written as it was a number of years before Sir Walter Scott's historical novels, is significant and novel with its element of national characterisation. As in all Chateaubriand's works, the descriptions of nature are fine.

It ought to be observed that when, in his Memoirs, Chateaubriand himself has occasion to write of *Les Martyrs*, he does so with proud modesty; he shows that he is conscious of the faultiness of the work in certain respects, and draws particular attention to the small degree of success it has had in comparison with *Le Génie du Christianisme*. He ascribes the comparatively unfavourable reception which it met with at first principally to outward circumstances; and in this he is right. Napoleon's relations with the Pope were at that moment strained and unfriendly. What Chateaubriand had written of Diocletian as the persecutor of the Christians was applied to the Emperor. There were allusions to the humble circumstances of Napoleon's youth and to his insatiable ambition in the description of Galerius, and allusions to his court in the description of Diocletian's.

Hence *Les Martyrs* was not supported and circulated by the Government, as Chateaubriand's first work had been. And the clergy, with the Bishop of Chartres at their head, did not consider the book sufficiently orthodox; they discovered heresies in it. But in the end, in spite of everything, it made its way. Four editions were sold in a few years.

What Chateaubriand desired to prove by means of this work was the peculiar adaptability of the Christian legend, of Christian supernaturalism, to the use of the poet. What he succeeded in proving was that in our days orthodox

Christian poetry comes centuries too late. The poets who have dealt with supernatural themes have as a rule been more successful in their representations of hell than in their descriptions of the state of the blessed. In Dante a perfect host of bold figures, so powerfully conceived that they dominate the whole poem, emerge from the waters and the flames of perdition. Amongst the damned of the Inferno those whom we remember best are the almost superhumanly defiant and proud Italian nobles of the poet's own day—Farinata, for example. As to Milton, his Satan is universally acknowledged to be his most masterly character; and it has been maintained, not without reason, that the prototype of this character is to be sought among those energetic Puritan rebels who, even when they were overcome, did not cease to defy the royal authority. Each age paints its Lucifer in its own image. Chateaubriand's rebellious spirit is not the traditional devil either, but a devil who has brought about the French Revolution. Every time he and his attendant courtiers open their mouths it is to utter one or other of the watchwords of the revolutionary period. In Satan's speech to his army we are astonished to hear the echo of the oratory of 1792. After a few introductory Biblical phrases he falls into the style of the hymns of the Revolution, which Chateaubriand has amused himself by caricaturing.

Satan says: "*Dieux des nations, trônes, ardeurs, guerriers généreux, milices invincibles, magnanimes enfants de cette forte patrie, le jour de gloire est arrivé.*"

French literature had progressed so far that the Marseillaise was put into the mouth of the devil by the country's greatest poet.

And what kind of being is he, this devil? A spark of life is communicated to him by caricaturing Rouget de Lisle. But for this he is a boneless, bloodless allegorical figure. Watch him descending to his kingdom. "Quicker than thought he traverses space, which will one day disappear (a truly marvellous idea, this!); on the farther side of the howling remains of chaos he comes to the boundaries of those regions which are as imperishable as the vengeance which created them — cursed regions, death's grave and

cradle, over which time has no power, and which will still exist when the universe has been carried away like a tent that is set up for a day ; . . . he follows no path through the darkness, but, drawn downwards by the weight of his crimes(!), descends *naturally* into hell." In his kingdom he is surrounded by figures which are either purely allegorical—in which case they are the funnier the more terrible the author has intended them to be—or else caricatures of Voltairians and Voltaire, which, in the middle of this solemn epic poem, produce the effect of scraps of ill-natured newspaper articles which have found their way in by some mistake.

Death is thus described : "A phantom suddenly appears upon the threshold of the inexorable portals—it is Death. It shows like a dark spot against the flames of the burning prison-cells behind it ; its skeleton allows the livid yellow beams of hell-fire to pass through the apertures between its bones. . . . Satan, seized with horror, turns away his head to avoid the skeleton's kiss." And here are two other demons : "Bound by a hundred knots of adamant (!) to a throne of bronze, the demon of Despair sits ruling the empire of Sorrow. . . . At the entrance of the first vestibule the Eternity of Sufferings lies stretched upon a bed of iron ; he is motionless ; his heart does not even beat ; in his hand he holds an inexhaustible hour-glass. He knows and says only one word—Never." We are reminded of the automaton upon a clock, which says nothing but Cuc-koo.

These demons are like nothing upon earth, but the prototypes of the demons of false wisdom are unmistakable. We have seen that all the ideas of the day on the subject of religion might be summed up in the one word, *order*. Hence in hell, as well as in heaven, order is pertinaciously insisted on. Apropos of a quarrel in hell we read : "A terrible conflict would have ensued if God, who is the sole origin of all *order*, even in hell, had not reduced the brawlers to silence." And we are told of the demon of False Wisdom : "He found fault with the works of the Almighty ; he desired in his pride to establish another *order* amongst the angels and in the kingdom of heavenly wisdom ; it was he who became the father of Atheism, that horrible spectre whom

Satan himself had not begotten, and who fell in love with Death."

Curiously enough it is precisely a change of order, a change in the order of precedence in the court of heaven itself, which this most hateful of all devils has been attempting to make.

He speaks. "The feigned severity of his voice, his apparent calmness, deceive the blinded crowd: 'Monarchs of hell, ye know that I have always been opposed to violence; we shall only prevail by gentleness, by argument, by persuasion. Let me spread among my worshippers and among the Christians themselves those principles which dissolve the ties of society and undermine the foundations of empires!'"

Compare with this the description of the philosophers of the day: "These disciples of a vain science attack the Christians, praise a life of retirement, live at the feet of the great, and ask for money. Some of them occupy themselves seriously with the idea of forming a sort of Platonic commonwealth, peopled by sages, who will spend their lives together as friends and brothers; others meditate profoundly on the secrets of nature. Some see everything in mind, others seek everything in matter; some, although they live under a monarchy, preach a republic, asserting that society ought to be demolished and rebuilt upon a new plan; others, in imitation of the Christians, attempt to teach the people morality. Divided as regards what is good, of one accord in all that is evil, swollen with vanity, taking themselves for great geniuses, these sophists invent all manner of extraordinary notions and systems. At their head is Hieroclos, a man worthy to be the leader of such a battalion. . . . There is something cynical and shameless in his face; it is easy to see how unfit his ignoble hands are to wield the sword of the soldier, how fit to handle the pen of the atheist or the sword of the executioner."

These assertions are made of Rome and of Hieroclos, but Paris and Voltaire are so plainly indicated that proof is unnecessary.

French literature had now come the length of representing Voltaire, the man who time after time struck the sword

out of the hands of the Catholic executioners and extinguished the flames in which they were preparing to burn innocent victims, as a man specially cut out for the trade of executioner. And so careless had the champions of orthodoxy become that they forgot his obstinate faith in God, and, desiring to paint the devil as black as possible, represented him as an atheist. Now, whatever else Satan and his comrades may be, they neither are nor can be atheists.[1]

Let us turn from Chateaubriand's hell to his Paradise. It is always difficult to describe heaven. We all know what hell is, but when heaven is in question a certain feeling of embarrassment comes over us. Information is scarce, as a French lady said. And to describe it was doubly difficult at the time when Parny, in his *Guerre des Dieux*, had, so to speak, produced in anticipation a parody of any such attempt that might be made. Fragments of Parny's graceless poem were still in all men's minds. Its best scenes, such as the arrival of the Trinity at Mount Olympus, and the return visit paid in heaven by the gods, are really witty, although the style, instead of corresponding to the imposing title, is as smooth and polished as the paintings of "Velvet" Breughel. Yet even Parny's scurrility did not make the heaven of orthodoxy as comical as it is made by Chateaubriand's enthusiasm.

"In the centre of the created worlds, in the midst of the innumerable stars which serve as ramparts, roads and avenues, is suspended the great city of God, of which no mortal tongue can tell the marvels. The Almighty himself laid its twelve foundation stones, and surrounded it with that wall of jasper which the beloved disciple saw the angel measuring with the golden reed. Clothed with the glory of the Most High, Jerusalem is adorned like a bride for her bridegroom. . . . Richness of material vies with perfection of form. Here hang in mid-air galleries of sapphires and diamonds, which the genius of man feebly imitated in the gardens of Babylon. There rise triumphal arches, built of

[1] Paul Heyse expresses this thought in an excellent epigram:

Bist du schon gut, weil du gläubig bist?
Der Teufel ist sicher kein Atheist,

dazzling stars. Arcades of suns traverse the endless spaces of the firmament. . . ."

A native of Copenhagen is irresistibly reminded by all this of the glories of "Tivoli" as they revealed themselves to his childish eyes on evenings when the grounds were illuminated.

We are allowed a glimpse of the interior of the holy city. Here the choirs of cherubim and seraphim, angels and archangels, principalities and powers, are perpetually meeting and separating. These beings, who, it would seem, had not been entirely safe from ridicule, seeing that Parny had belaboured them so unmercifully, now hold a new triumphal entry.[1] From this time onward they become regular denizens of the realm of poetry ; we find the whole host assembled even in De Vigny's *Eloa* (1823) and in Victor Hugo's Odes (livre i., ode 5, ode 9, ode 10). We learn what their occupations are : "Some are the keepers of the 20,000 war-chariots of Zebaoth and Elohim, others guard the quivers of the Lord, his deadly thunderbolts, and the terrible horses which are the carriers of pestilence, war, famine, and death. One million of these ardent beings order the courses of the stars, relieving each other in this glorious occupation like the vigilant sentinels of a great army." In Parny's poem their occupation is less arduous. The duty he assigns to them, because of their limited intelligence, is principally that of acting as decorations. They stand in rows along the walls and look on.[2]

[1] O honte, ô crime ! on rosse les Puissances,
On jet à bas dix mille intelligences
Qui figuraient dans les processions;
De leurs gradins les Trônes on renverse,
On foule aux pieds les Dominations
Et des Vertus le troupeau se disperse.
. . . l'on jet à leur nez,
Devinez quoi ? les têtes chérubines
Aux frais mentons, aux lèvres purpurines.
Parny, *La Guerre des Dieux*, canto 10.

[2] Propres sans plus à garnir les gradins,
À cet emploi se borne leur génie,
C'est ce qu'au bal nous autres sots humains
Nous appelons : faire tapisserie,

All the things which Chateaubriand's angels guard lie, as it were, in a great arsenal ready for use on given occasions. In the following description we see them in use. The occasion is the proclamation by the Trinity to the blessed saints of Eudore's approaching martyrdom: "When these vicissitudes of the church had been communicated to the elect by a single word of the Almighty, there was silence in heaven for the space of half-an-hour. All the celestial beings cast their eyes to the ground. From the heights of heaven Mary let a first look of love fall upon the poor victim confided to her tender care. The palms of the confessors grew green again in their hands. The glorious squadron opened its ranks to make room for the new martyrs." Michael, the dragon-slayer, shoulders his redoubtable spear; his deathless comrades don shining cuirasses; diamond and golden shields, the quivers of the Lord, and the flaming swords are taken down from the vaulted roof of heaven; the wheels of the chariot of Immanuel turn upon their axles of fire and lightning; the cherubim spread their rushing wings, "*et allument la fureur de leurs yeux.*" This is half masquerade, half ballet.

But let us pass from these adjuncts to bliss itself. We find it thus described: "The chief happiness of the elect lies in the consciousness that their bliss is boundless; they experience for ever the delectable feelings of the mortal who has just done a virtuous or heroic deed, or of the genius in the act of conceiving a great idea, or of the man enjoying the delights of legitimate (!) love or of a friendship tried by long misfortune. The grandeur and the omnipotence of the Almighty are the constant theme of their discourse. 'O God,' they cry, 'how great Thou art!'"

Chateaubriand has not succeeded in making heavenly bliss particularly attractive. Our first feeling is apt to be one of pity for the unfortunate Deity thus compelled eternally to listen to his own praises. He is thus described: "Far from the eyes of the angels is accomplished the mystery of the Trinity. The Spirit which mounts and descends perpetually from the Son to the Father and from the Father to the Son unites itself with them in these un-

fathomable depths. A triangle of fire appears at the entrance to the Holy of Holies. The awe-stricken spheres stop in their courses, the hosannas of the angels are silenced. . . . The fiery triangle disappears, the sanctuary opens, and the three Potentates are seen. The Father sits upon a throne of clouds, a compass in his hands, a sphere beneath his feet ; on his right hand sits the Son, armed with lightnings ; on the left the Holy Spirit rises like a pillar of fire. Jehovah gives a sign, and time, reassured, continues its course."

We are not informed how many times in the day, week, or month this magnificent ceremony takes place. Possibly it is in the intervals of these accomplishments of the mystery of the Trinity that the Divine Being divides itself, for at times it appears to be divided : "Appealed to by the God of mercy and peace on behalf of the threatened church, the mighty and terrible God made known his plans to the assembled hosts of heaven."[1]

On ordinary occasions the Son sits at a mystic table, and four and twenty elders, clothed in white, with crowns of gold on their heads, sit upon thrones by his side. Close by stands his living chariot, the wheels of which emit fire. When the Expected of the Nations deigns to vouchsafe a perfect vision of himself to the elect, they fall down before him as if dead ; but he stretches forth his right hand and says to them : "Rise, ye blessed of my Father ! Look upon me. I am the First and the Last !"

We feel as if this performance must lose much of its impressiveness by repetition.

Cf. Parny :

Étaient-ils trois, ou bien n'étaient-ils qu'un ?
Trois en un seul ; vous comprenez, j'espère ?
Figurez-vous un vénérable père,
Au front serein, à l'air un peu commun,
Ni beau, ni laid, assez vert pour son âge
Et bien assis sur le dos d'un nuage . . .
De son bras droit à son bras gauche vole
Certain pigeon coiffé d'un auréole . . .
Sur ses genoux un bel agneau repose,
Qui, bien lavé, bien frais, bien délicat,
Portant au cou ruban couleur de rose,
De l'auréole emprunt aussi l'éclat.
Ainsi parut le triple personnage . . .

As an example of the supernaturalness of this heaven, it may be mentioned that the raiment of the holy elders is made *white* in the blood of the Lamb. That it is a modern production we observe from the fact that, in spite of the remarkable arbitrariness which prevails, its author has not escaped the influence of the spirit of his day, for even in this heaven we hear of laws of nature. We are told of the blessed that they desire to comprehend the laws which explain the easy flight of heavy bodies through the ether. This is a sort of anticipation of the standpoint in Byron's *Cain*.

From the artistic point of view it is interesting to observe the kind of imagery by means of which Chateaubriand, when he is neither borrowing from the Revelation of St. John nor from Milton, attempts to give an idea of the glories of heaven. When Dante makes the same attempt, he has recourse to visions, to the glories of that mystic rose which the Gothic cathedral builders feebly endeavoured to imitate ; but Chateaubriand, the man of modern ideas and of much experience as far as the outward world is concerned, has recourse to impressions of travel. The arcades of heaven are compared to the gardens of Babylon, to the pillars of Palmyra in the sands of the desert. When the blessed spirits are hastening through the created world we are told of the scene that displays itself to them: "Thus present themselves to the eye of the traveller the great plains of India, the fertile valleys of Delhi and Kashmir, shores covered with pearls and fragrant with ambergris, where the tranquil waves lay themselves to rest beneath the blossoming cinnamon trees." Such imagery is somewhat too realistic for the spiritual theme. We shrink from representing all these archangels to ourselves in Indian surroundings. But it is in such ways that nature revenges herself upon the man who believes he can set her aside or can produce something superior to her productions. A later author of this same school, De Vigny, who writes as much under the influence of Ossian as of Milton, compares the ether of the firmament to the mists of the Scottish mountains. The indistinct form of Lucifer descried far off in

space by the angel Eloa is compared to the waving plaid of some wandering Scotchwoman, seen through the misty clouds falling on the hill-tops. The conjunction of an angel and a plaid strikes us as a curious one.

The scenery which this group of authors considers unquestionably the most beautiful is not the jumbled, pot-pourri landscape of the German Romanticists; no, what they, in harmony with the spirit of their day, admire is that Paradisaic landscape in which the strictest order prevails —symmetrical, architectural, a sort of dilution of Claude Lorraine. Take, for an example, the commencement of De Vigny's *Le Déluge:*

La terre était riante et dans sa fleur première ;
Le jour avait encor cette même lumière
Qui du ciel embelli couronna les hauteurs
Quand Dieu la fit tomber de ses doigts créateurs.
Rien n'avait dans sa forme altéré la nature,
Et des monts *réguliers* l'immense architecture
S'élevait jusqu' aux cieux par ses degrès *égaux*
Sans que rien de leur chaîne eût brisé les anneaux.
. . . . . .
Et des fleuves aux mers le cours était *réglé*
Dans un *ordre* parfait qui n'était pas troublé.
Jamais un voyageur n'aurait, sous le feuillage,
Rencontré, loin des flots, l'émail du coquillage,
Et la perle habitait son palais de cristal ;
Chaque trésor restait dans l'élément natal,
Sans enfreindre jamais la céleste défense.

This partiality for model, ideal landscape tempts our authors more and more frequently to lay the scenes of their works in heaven.

Chateaubriand continues to be a greater master in the description of earthly than of heavenly surroundings.

The action of De Vigny's earliest poems takes place, in genuine Seraphic style, midway between heaven and earth.

The scene of Victor Hugo's ode, *Louis XVII.*, is the gate of heaven, that of *La Vision* heaven itself, the heavenly Jerusalem. In *La Vision* we come upon familiar imagery:

Le char des Séraphins fidèles,
Semé d'yeux, brillant d'étincelles,
S'arrêta sur son triple essieu ;

Et la roue aux traces bruyantes,
Et les quatres ailes tournoyantes
Se turent au souffle de Dieu.
. . . .
Adorant l'Essence inconnue
Les Saints, les Martyrs glorieux,
Contemplaient, sons l'ardente Nue,
Le Triangle mystérieux.

Though Lamartine in his first works lingers lovingly over terrestrial scenes, he yet constantly soars in hymns into the celestial ether where, as he tells us, sacred poetry dwells, crowned with palms and stars.

Lord Byron, who, like De Vigny, writes a poem on the Flood (*Heaven and Earth*), is also partial to ether, though not such theological ether, as a surrounding; but he loves wilder scenery, and it is as the painter of the sea that he finds his true sphere. He lifts poetry out of its ethereal environment and deposits it in the fresh, salt element.

Chateaubriand, then, hardly succeeded in proving what he wished to prove, the superiority of Christianity to the purely human sources of poetic inspiration. Each time he attempts to do so he exposes or condemns himself. I adduce one other striking example of this.

His hero, Eudore, sailing up the Gulf of Megara, with Ægina in front of him, Piræus on the right and Corinth on the left, sees all these towns, which once were so flourishing, lying in ruins. A Greek fellow-passenger is moved to tears by the remembrance of his country's ancient glory, and we are told in touching words how the individual feels as if his individual griefs disappeared when he is brought face to face with the great, overwhelming calamities which crush whole nations. Then Eudore says: "Such an idea seemed to be beyond my youthful grasp, and nevertheless I understood it, whilst the other young men who were on board did not. What caused this difference between us? Our religions. They were pagans, I was a Christian."

Chateaubriand plainly desires to impress upon us that such an appreciation of natural surroundings and the lessons taught by them is a special possession of the Christian, of which the pagan, as pagan, is destitute. But his position is con-

siderably weakened by our knowledge that the utterance referred to by Eudore is nothing more nor less than a translation from a famous letter written by Sulpicius to Cicero,[1] that the sentiments in question are actually the sentiments of a pagan. We can hardly be expected to accept this as a proof of the pagan's want of poetic feeling. But the trait is typical. Throughout all Chateaubriand's writings dogmatic religion is constantly proclaimed to be in possession of certain supernatural beauties and qualities of which nature, as nature, is devoid; and yet everything in that religion which is of poetical or moral value is simply an expression of human nature. As Feuerbach puts it: "Every theory of God is, in its essence, a theory of human nature."

Passing this half audacious, half conventional work, *Les Martyrs*, once again in review, we cannot deny that the part of it which directly treats of the supernatural world of Christianity is a failure. Indeed, Chateaubriand himself openly confesses as much in his Memoirs. The parts which have any real value are the purely human parts, one of which we shall presently criticise. It was inevitable that the doubt and indifference of the century concerning the supernatural world should set its mark on the work of an author whose own religious enthusiasm was as much a matter of deliberate intention and determination as Chateaubriand's.

Chateaubriand was not a conscious hypocrite, but he deceived himself. Proof of the manner in which he himself was affected by the reading of his *Martyrs* is to be found in that refined and charming autobiographical work, which all agree in accepting as reliable—*Les Enchantements de Prudence*, by Madame de Saman, otherwise Madame Allart de Méritens, the last woman whom Chateaubriand loved, and who loved him in return.

This lady tells how, in the summer of 1828, they used to meet at the Pont d'Austerlitz and dine together in the Jardin des Plantes in a private room. "He ordered champagne, to dispel my coldness, as he said; and then I sang to him Béranger's songs—*Mon âme*, *La bonne vieille*, *Le Dieu des bonnes gens*, &c. He listened as if enchanted." She

[1] *Ad familiares*, lib. iv. epist. 5.

paints these meetings in the warmest colours,[1] and she mentions that it was one of Chateaubriand's greatest pleasures to listen to her reading passages from his works. (Both in this book and elsewhere Madame de Saman shows herself to have been possessed of excellent literary taste.) He especially loved to hear her read his descriptions of landscape. "But sometimes," she says, "to affect him more profoundly, I produced *Les Martyrs*, and read the speeches and thanksgiving hymns of the confessors, or the thrilling prison and torture-chamber scenes. Then he could not restrain his tears. One day he began to weep; I continued to read; he sobbed convulsively; I still went on, and when I came to the passage which tells how Eudore secretly offered to sacrifice himself in order to win the salvation of his mother, who had been too weak in her love for her children, he could contain himself no longer, and burst into a passion of tears and sobs. It was a case of emotions returning to their source. His highly strung nerves gave way. Completely overcome, exhausted with weeping, he expressed his gratitude to me, said that he had never experienced such rapture, called me by all the sweet names men give to the Muses, told me that I was beautiful, more especially praised my eyes and their expression, imagining in the ardour of his passion that he had never seen anything like them before." The lady was at this time about twenty, Chateaubriand exactly sixty years old.

This quotation shows us that even such frigid passages in *Les Martyrs* as the speeches of the white-robed elders had really been *felt* by the author himself. We are touched by this young and noble woman's enthusiastic admiration for an old man, and the man himself rises in the reader's estimation from the fact of his being able, even at that age, to win the love of such a woman. But it is in strange surroundings that we come upon this outburst of strong emotion, a thing so rare with Chateaubriand that it may almost be called unique.

[1] "In this condition he was more enamoured, more vivacious; he told me that I gave him the most rapturous pleasure, called me a seductress, &c., and in that secluded place did what he pleased" (Madame de Saman, *Les Enchantements de Prudence. Avec préface de George Sand*, 1873, pp. 166, &c.).

Champagne, the songs of his political and religious opponent, Béranger, caresses and declarations of love, fits of weeping and sobbing over *Les Martyrs*, followed by more love-making! What an environment for the epic of orthodoxy! What an excess of human passion in a Seraphic poet, a former minister of state and pilgrim to Jerusalem![1]

Les Martyrs shows Chateaubriand's weakest side as an author. Such a scene as that described with the best intentions by Madame Allart de Méritens shows his weakest side as a man. And yet this outburst of human passion makes almost a satisfactory impression upon us compared with the artificiality by which he is so often distinguished. God and the king are too constantly in his mouth. We must not, however, allow this artificiality to blind us to what is really great in the talent and in the life of this remarkable personage.

In order to get a complete impression of Chateaubriand it is necessary to read the twelve volumes of *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, as also those by which they are supplemented. Just as Rousseau's *Confessions* form the most interesting of his books, so the *Mémoires* constitute Chateaubriand's most impressive work. In them we find a complete personality—a whole man, and that a man of mark. This important personage, who possesses no great acuteness of observation as far as humanity in general is concerned, who, in fact, occupies himself very little with humanity in general, has focussed all his acuteness upon the one subject which really interests him, his own ego, and has half consciously, half unconsciously, but in any case very completely, revealed and exhibited it to us. It is an ego proud to the verge of arrogance, melancholy to the verge of despondency, sceptical to the verge of indifference, without faith in progress of any kind, profoundly persuaded of the vanity of even those things which afford it temporary pleasure, such as love, fame, worldly position, and, as time goes on, ever more saturated with ennui and ever more absorbingly occupied with itself. It is an ego which owns a

[1] Chateaubriand, *Les Martyrs*, more particularly books iii. and viii.; *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*; Sainte-Beuve, *Chateaubriand et son groupe littéraire sous l'Empire*; Nettement, *Histoire de la littérature française sous la Restauration*, i., ii.

warm, prolific imagination and great artistic talent, and which, at a period (the end of the eighteenth century) when taste was all in favour of the light, the pretty, the small, felt itself solitary in its love of the grand, of the beauty of magnitude.

In a certain sense Chateaubriand was like no other man of his day. He satisfied, as we saw, the requirement of the moment so exactly with his *Génie du Christianisme* that, as a sort of intellectual standard-bearer, he acquired an importance out of proportion to his character and talent.

In so far the moment at which he made his appearance magnified him.

But, looking at the matter from the other side, it may be maintained with equal certainty that the moment at which he entered upon his career forced on him a part which, for half a century, brought him into conflict with his own inmost nature. That nature was always rebelling against the part; the man's independence and uncontrollableness were in perpetual collision with the politico-religious orthodoxy which it had become his life-task to give expression to and champion. In other words, his position in the world involved him in incurable discord with himself.

In his old age he sometimes plainly confesses this. Towards the conclusion of his work on the congress of Verona he says openly: "As an officer of the regiment of Navarre I had come back from the forests of America to join legitimate monarchy in its exile and to fight under its banner *against my own judgment* (contre mes propres lumières)—*all this without conviction*, simply from a soldier's sense of duty, and because I, having had the honour of driving in the royal carriages from and to Versailles, considered myself peculiarly bound to support a prince of the blood royal."[1] We find him, however, only two pages farther on in the same book ascribing the fortunate issue of the war in Spain, which he had forced on against the desire of France, Spain, and England, less to his own ability, which he is not at all given to undervaluing, than to "one of the latest miracles performed by Heaven for the race of St. Louis."

[1] *Congrès de Vérone*, ii. 527.

Here, as in all his later works, he makes a marked difference between monarchy as an idea and the person of the monarch. He tries to reconcile avowed, unaltered loyalty to ideas with a frank contempt for the capacities and characters of kings.

There is no doubt that the foolish ingratitude of the Bourbons towards the man to whom they owed so much added largely to this contempt. But in his Memoirs he shows that it began early ; he would have us believe that it dated from his earliest acquaintance with Louis XVIII. and his environment. He soon perceived that King Louis did not favour him, and it wounded his pride to find that the King's brother, the future Charles X., had not read one of his books, not even *Le Génie du Christianisme.* Looking back on his past life he writes: "Louis the Eighteenth and his brother did not understand me at all. The latter said of me: 'Good-hearted and hot-headed!' These hackneyed words . . . were completely misapplied. My head is very cool, and my heart has never beat very warmly for kings."

The old monarchy, unless it actually felt itself so self-dependent as to be indebted to no one, was bound to regard itself as under obligation to Chateaubriand, not only because, as an officer in Condé's army, he had fought and suffered in its cause, not only because, under Napoleon, he had stopped midway in his career and defied the mighty potentate by sending in his resignation after the execution of the Duke of Enghien, but also because, in 1814, even before Napoleon's abdication at Versailles, he had influenced public opinion in favour of the Bourbons by means of a pamphlet which Louis XVIII. himself declared to have been as useful to him as a hundred thousand soldiers.

The pamphlet in question, *Buonaparte et les Bourbons,* is perhaps the most passionate, most vindictive, most venomous, and most artificially enthusiastic party work written by Chateaubriand. It is an insane shriek of hatred of the fallen Napoleon, who is stripped of every fragment of his glory, and a hurrah of hollow enthusiasm for sunken-chested Louis XVIII., who is deified. In no other work does Chateaubriand display so much vindictive stupidity. He goes so far

as to deny Bonaparte's ability as a general. He describes him as an incompetent officer, who could do nothing but command his troops to go forward, and who gained his victories simply by the excellence of these troops and not by his conduct of them, as a commander who never ensured and never knew when to make a retreat, and who, far from improving the art of war, led it back to its infancy again.[1] The Marquise de Seiglière in Sandeau's famous comedy does not talk greater nonsense about Napoleon.

Louis XVIII., on the other hand, is called a prince famed for his sagacity. We are told that, of all the rulers possible for France at the moment, he is the one most suited to the position of the country and the *spirit of the century*, whilst Bonaparte is the one of all others least fit to reign.

This is what we find in the official pamphlet. But how differently Chateaubriand thinks and speaks in his Memoirs! In them he does justice to Bonaparte's military skill; he says of him that "he invented war in the grand style;" and he has also suddenly discovered that the winning of one battle after another is no inconsiderable part of the duty of a general. Because they flatter his own vanity, he relates various anecdotes which show how Napoleon, unbiassed by his (Chateaubriand's) hatred, displayed his appreciation of him. After Chateaubriand had turned against him, Napoleon demanded to be informed by the Academy, why a prize had not been awarded to the *Génie du Christianisme*. And when (at Fontainebleau) he had read with perfect calmness the offensive pamphlet described above, he merely remarked: "*This* is correct; *that* is not correct. I do not blame Chateaubriand. He was my enemy in my day of prosperity; but those miscreants," &c., &c. Apropos of this, Chateaubriand makes the amusing and surprising remark: "My admiration of Bonaparte (this time without the *u*) has always been great and sincere." He is undoubtedly telling the truth. He admired and envied Napoleon. He measured himself with him and felt the disadvantage of having such a contemporary.

[1] *Buonaparte et les Bourbons*, pp. 36, 37.

In his Memoirs he also tells the truth about those kings for whom he professed such loyalty and reverence.

He tells that in 1814 he dreaded the impression likely to be produced by Louis XVIII.'s personal appearance, and he gives a copy of the high-flown description which he in consequence circulated of the King's entry into Paris, a description which he wrote, he says, without being asked to do so, and without any taste for such compositions, but *beautifying everything with the aid of the Muses*. "A man makes his appearance before the officers, who have never seen him, before the grenadiers, who hardly know him by name. Who is this man? He is the King! One and all fall down at his feet."

Then he tells the real facts of the entrance, and calmly remarks: *I lied with regard to the soldiers*. He gives a fine description of the attitude of the remnant of Napoleon's Old Guard, who were drawn up outside Notre Dame, and through whose ranks the King had to pass. "I do not believe that human countenances ever wore a more terrible and threatening expression." He declares that they looked as if they were on the point of cutting the King to pieces.

And he makes no endeavour to show the baselessness of their contempt. After telling how his plan of defence during the Hundred Days was foiled by the cowardliness of the King and his immediate following, he exclaims: "Why did I come into the world *in an age in which I am so out of place?* Why have I been a Royalist *against my instinct* at a time when a miserable tribe of courtiers would not listen to me, could not understand me? Why was my lot cast amongst that crowd of mediocrities who looked on me as a madman when I spoke of courage, as a revolutionist when I spoke of liberty?"[1]

As the Memoirs advance, the champion of monarchy throws ever more light upon the piety, understanding, and character of Louis XVIII. "It is to be feared that to *the most Christian King* religion was no more than a medicinal liquor, well adapted to form one of the ingredients of the brew called monarchy." He writes of "the voluptuous imagina-

[1] *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, 1849, iv. 452, &c., vi. 1, &c.

tion which the King had inherited from his father." He remarks that he was fond of praising himself and making fun of himself at the same time ; for instance, when speaking of possible heirs to the throne, "he drew himself up with a capable, arch air ; but it was not my intention to dispute the King's ability in this or any other matter." [1] When giving a more minute description of Louis's character, he says: "Selfish and devoid of prejudices, it was his aim to preserve his own tranquillity at all costs. . . . Without being cruel, the King was inhuman." He tells how Louis boasted of being able to raise a favourite so high as to make him the object of universal envy, and thereupon remarks: "To be able to raise others, one must be certain of not falling one's self. But what were kings in the days of Louis XVIII.? Though they could still make a man rich, it was no longer in their power to make him great. They were now nothing but their favourites' bankers."

And not content even with such severe language as this, Chateaubriand at times takes to satire. In his account of the Congress of Verona he tells how it came about that he at one time stood so high in the King's favour that his fellow-ministers were positively jealous of him: "The King often went to sleep in the Cabinet Council ; and it was the best thing he could do, for when he was not asleep he told stories. He had a great gift of mimicry. But this did not amuse M. de Villèle, who wished to discuss affairs of state. M. de Corcière put his elbows, his snuff-box, and his blue pocket-handkerchief on the table ; the other ministers listened in silence. I alone could not help being amused by His Majesty's anecdotes, and this evidently delighted him. When he was searching for an excuse to tell a story, he would say in his little thin, clear voice: 'I want to make M. de Chateaubriand laugh.'" [2]

It does not surprise us that Chateaubriand, after demonstrating how in a democratic community men make their way by talking volubly of liberty, the progress of

[1] "Et il se rengorgea d'un air capable et goguenard ; mais je ne prétendais disputer au Roi aucune puissance."

[2] *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, viii. 216, 222 ; *Congrès de Vérone*, i. 172, ii. 525.

humanity, the future, &c., should wind up with the following description of the conditions prevailing in the aristocratic, royalist society, the praises of which he had always sung: "Play whist, bring out with an air of seriousness and profundity the impertinences and witticisms which you have prepared, and the brilliant career of your genius is assured."

Thus completely was the man who inaugurates the half-beliefs, the æsthetic Christianity, and the affected royalism of the nineteenth century cured of all illusions.

He was too proud to wear his mask to the end, and he threw it off completely "beyond the grave."

He himself names as his "chief faults" ennui, disgust with everything, and constant doubt. These faults had their good sides. Profound indifference to all this world has to bestow preserved him from the temptations of base ambition; doubt preserved him from placing implicit confidence in the doctrines which a spirit of aristocratic defiance more than anything else led him to champion; his pride sustained him, and though it did not preserve him from hypocrisy, it kept him from ever committing a mean action. But, until the ingratitude of the authority which he had reinstated roused him to rebellion, there was a hopeless discord between his nature and the part he played.

VIII

MADAME DE KRÜDENER

AMONGST the personages of the day we come upon one class peculiarly characteristic of this period, namely, the converts. In an anxiously religious age following upon one of little faith this class was inevitably a numerous one. Laharpe's conversion during the very course of the Revolution had excited much attention. Chateaubriand himself was a convert. It is possibly the converts who help us to the clearest understanding of the nature of the new spirit, for in them we see it striving with and overcoming the old. The convert is, moreover, always ardent; he is full of his new belief, and consequently has, or affects, a peculiarly expressive countenance. The rule that the spirit of a period mirrors itself typically in that period's leading characters holds doubly good in the case of the individual whose character it is to be converted, especially if that individual is a woman. History contains no record of a woman, with her receptive nature, having led her age onward to new development, but some woman generally presents us with a specially marked type of the character of her age. The *émigrés* group themselves round Madame de Staël, the leaders of Romanticism rally round Caroline Schlegel, and the age of the rehabilitation of religion finds poetically pious expression in Madame de Krüdener.

In Madame de Staël's *Delphine* there is a scene in which the heroine enchants a large company with her graceful and expressive performance of a certain foreign dance, the shawl-dance. This scene had a foundation of reality. Her beautiful dancing was one of the many things for which the young and charming Baroness de Krüdener was remarkable. In *Delphine* we read: "Never did grace and beauty produce

a more remarkable effect upon a numerous assembly. This foreign dance has a charm of which nothing we are accustomed to see can give any idea. It is an altogether Asiatic mixture of indolence and vivacity, of melancholy and gaiety. . . . Sometimes when the music became softer Delphine walked a few steps with head bent and arms crossed, as if some memory or some regret had suddenly intermingled itself with the joyousness of a festival; but, soon recommencing her light and lively dance, she enveloped herself in an Indian shawl, which, showing the contours of her figure and falling back with her long hair, made of her a perfectly enchanting picture." The word *Asiatic* is unmistakably the characterising word. In 1803 Joubert writes of Madame de Krüdener: "She is charming, with something Asiatic about her—nature exaggerated. Such extreme tenderness of feeling can hardly exist without a touch of extravagance."

Julie Barbe (Juliane Barbara) de Vietinghof was born in 1764 at Riga, in Livonia. Her education was conducted half on French, half on German lines. Her father was a distinguished, sagacious man of the world, a philosopher and Freemason, an art-lover and a Mæcenas; her mother, a sensible, conscientious woman, had been brought up on strict, old-fashioned Lutheran principles. Both parents belonged to the highest class of the old German-Russian aristocracy of the Baltic Provinces, and were connected with the Russian court.

The first teacher who made a real impression upon their young daughter, and whose instructions powerfully influenced her future, was the famous Parisian ballet-dancer, Vestris. At the age of eighteen Julie married Baron de Krüdener, a Russian diplomatist, a man fifteen years her senior, who had already been married twice, and had been divorced from both his wives. Her heart had no share in this union; the match was considered an excellent one, her vanity was gratified, and she had no manner of objection to her husband. He seems to have been a sensible, worthy, well-educated man, cultivated and calm, by no means devoid of feeling, but both by nature and from his position wedded

to all the conventions of society. The Graces had not stood by his cradle.

It was into the most brilliant society of the eighteenth century that Baron de Krüdener introduced his wife. At the time of his marriage he was Russian envoy in Kurland, and immediately after the honeymoon the couple proceeded to Mitau, where Krüdener negotiated the incorporation of the Duchy with Russia, and where they were honoured with a visit from the Czar (Paul I.). Amateur theatricals provided the young wife with her chief occupation and interest. She went on acting until almost immediately before the birth of her only son. A few weeks after this event the young mother was presented to the Empress Catherine at St. Petersburg. Thence Krüdener was sent as Russian ambassador to Venice, the most dissipated town of the day, where his wife lived in a whirl of gaiety.

In Venice a gifted young enthusiast, Alexander Stakjev, her husband's private secretary, fell violently in love with Madame de Krüdener, but so great was his esteem for Krüdener and for the object of his attachment that not a syllable crossed his lips. So well did he preserve his secret that Krüdener took him with him when he was transferred to Copenhagen in 1784. In the woods of Frederiksborg Juliane and her adorer roved about admiring the beauties of nature in company. It was to the husband that Stakjev at last naïvely confessed his passion. Krüdener was imprudent enough to show the letter to his wife, who now for the first time became certain of the nature of Stakjev's feeling for her, a feeling which she did not return, but which, with innate coquetry, she had encouraged. The knowledge that it was in her power to call forth such a passion had an extraordinary effect upon her. From this moment it was the one dream of her life to be adored. Stakjev took his departure, but all that had been fermenting in Julie's young heart now forced its way to the surface. Possessed by an ardent desire to love and be loved, she had first attempted to find the ideal of her dreams in her husband. When he, more the father than the lover, only tried to keep her

extravagant feeling in check, she fell back upon herself, and grieved at being what is now called misunderstood, but what she called "not felt." Stakjev's passion rushed past her like a breath of fire and thawed the inward cold which, as it were, held her emotions ice-bound. They now demanded an outlet. In Copenhagen, which, of all the places she had lived in, seemed to her the most unbearable—it is to be remembered that this was a hundred years ago—she threw herself into a whirl of trivial social amusements, which engrossed her time and mind, and brought in their train much indiscriminate and reckless coquetry. Shattered nerves and an affection of the lungs were the result of all the balls and theatricals, and she was ordered to spend the winter of 1789 in the South.

Instead of making her way to some quiet sunny spot on the shores of the Mediterranean, the lady whose health had completely broken down under the strain of town life hastened to Paris and there revived. In this intellectual city she is suddenly struck by her own ignorance, acquires a taste for reading, or rather for writers, and procures introductions to the great authors of the day—Barthélemy, the author of *Le jeune Anarcharse*, at whose reception into the Academy she was present, and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, for whose *Paul et Virginie* she had always had the greatest admiration. She makes a cult of Saint-Pierre and nature, witnesses the fall of the Bastille, but at the same time runs up an account of some 20,000 francs at her milliner's. When she is in the south of France, a young officer, M. de Frègeville, falls in love with her. Less inexperienced now than she had been in Copenhagen, she yields, after a struggle, to his persuasions. He induces her to spend another winter in France, in spite of a promise given to her husband, and to return to Paris instead of to Copenhagen in the following year (1791).

After Louis XVI.'s unsuccessful attempt at flight, Paris was no longer a safe place of residence for Madame de Krüdener. She made her escape from France with M. de Frègeville, who was disguised as her lackey, spent some weeks at Brussels, and then travelled by way of Cassel and

Hanover to Hamburg, still accompanied and protected by her lover in his character of lackey. At Hamburg she was met by her husband, but as she even there refused to part from her favourite servant, there was a violent scene. Krüdener advised her to go for a time to her mother at Riga, and thither too she was accompanied by the disguised French officer. Her mother received her most cordially. In 1792, when she and her mother went to St. Petersburg to see her dying father, she again met her husband, who had come there to raise the money he required to procure a divorce. She threw herself at his feet, was forgiven, and made promises which she did not keep. For the next few years she wandered about Europe, separated from her husband and from De Frègeville, but living the life of the dissolute, gay lady of the last decade of the eighteenth century. Even in his most private letters of this year her husband never mentions her name.

After meeting her old adorer, Stakjev, at St. Petersburg, Madame de Krüdener went to Riga, where she remained for some time, then to Berlin, and thence to Leipzig, where she spent great part of 1793. From Leipzig she returned to Riga, but almost at once finding that town unbearable, retired to the family property of Kosse. Here she formed great plans ; it was her intention to become the benefactress of her serfs, "to educate the Esthonian people and make them happy." In 1795 she stayed for a few months at Riga, and then went to Berlin. In 1796 she lived first at Lausanne, then at Geneva with her friend, Abbé Becker. She frequented the society of the French *émigrés*, was perfectly idolised, and went from fête to fête dancing the shawl-dance, which for a time was the great passion of her now mature womanhood. When young girls began to dance the shawl-dance too, she went off with her friend, the *émigré* De Vallin, to Munich. After De Vallin's compulsory return to France, and Becker's death, Madame de Krüdener suddenly began to long for her husband and her step-child, but all that came of this was a flying visit to Munich, where she had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of this step-child, now a grown woman. After a stay at Teplitz, she returned to

Munich, but was presently at Teplitz again, and thence went to Berlin, where, in 1800, M. de Krüdener took up his residence as Russian ambassador. During these years of wandering she had probably changed her lovers even more frequently than her place of residence.

The winter of 1800–1801 she spent in Berlin as Russian ambassadress; but her unpunctuality and general eccentricity made her anything but a favourite at the well-ordered court of William III. Social success being her one desire, she tried, now that she was no longer young, to attract attention by the audacity of her toilettes. She had never been a beauty, but her expressive features and her gracefulness had always been much admired. The simplicity which had made her so irresistible ten years earlier, had now given place to a desire to create a sensation by a daring style of dress, or rather undress. She covered her still beautiful hair with a wig, according to the fashion of the day. Her features and complexion had lost the freshness of youth.

It was at this time that her restless heart, which still craved for strong emotions, began to open itself to the influence of religious fanaticism. In a letter to her most intimate friend she writes: "Shall I confess something to you? It is in all humility of heart I write it. You know that I am not arrogant—how can a Christian be? But I believe that God has deigned to bless my husband ever since my return. There is no imaginable benefit or favour that is not bestowed on him. Why should I not believe that the prayer of a pious heart which simply and trustingly beseeches God to help it to contribute to another's happiness is certain to be answered?"

Why not, indeed? We should willingly believe that it was the presence of Madame de Krüdener which induced Providence to shower orders and distinctions upon the Baron if we did not happen to know for a fact that it was another, less romantic reason which led the Emperor Paul thus to favour him. The facts of the case are as follows: In the middle of an entertainment which the Baron was giving in Berlin to the Prussian royal family and the Grand Duchess Helena, a despatch arrived from the autocrat of all

the Russias, commanding Krüdener instantly to declare war with Prussia. Their Majesties were still in the house. Instead of breaking up the fête by displaying this Gorgon's head to his guests, the Russian ambassador calmly let them dance on ; and knowing, like the sagacious politician he was, how imprudent and how fatal for Russia such a war would be, he wrote a dissuasive letter to his Emperor, though well aware that, in all human probability, life-long exile in Siberia would be his reward. Naturally he mentioned nothing of all this to his wife. The improbable happened. Paul allowed himself to be dissuaded, and, full of admiration for his minister's courage and wisdom, overwhelmed him with proofs of his favour.—So we see there is a different explanation from Madame de Krüdener's.

From this time onwards her letters become ever more pious and edifying. She now writes of religion as her panacea against melancholy, and tells of the thousand sources of happiness which it offers.

In the midst of all this comes a new love affair and another separation from her husband. In the summer of 1801 we find her at Teplitz. Then she pays a long visit to Madame de Staël at Coppet, where the desire to make a sensation as an authoress is aroused in her, and she dashes off three short stories and the beginning of a novel. To make this last as perfect as possible, she goes to Paris to seek advice from Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and make Chateaubriand's acquaintance. Chateaubriand gives her a copy of his *Génie du Christianisme* before he has even distributed his presentation copies, and she is not a little proud when Madame de Staël finds this book upon her table. But she makes such indiscreet, unscrupulous use of Chateaubriand's confidences that he is estranged from her for years, a complete breach being only with difficulty avoided.

She is surprised in Paris by the news of Krüdener's death. She shuts herself up, full of grief and remorse. It had been "her dream to return to him once more, ease the burden of years for him, and requite his unending generosity." It was not long, however, before Madame de Krüdener issued from her retirement. In her first short stories she had

imitated Saint-Pierre's style. Now her novel was ready. She called it *Valérie;* her own youthful love affair with Alexander Stakjev had furnished her with the plot. It is a well-written, sympathetic story, perceptibly influenced by *Werther.* But Madame de Krüdener was not satisfied with writing a novel; she wished her novel to be read and talked of. The manner in which she set herself to ensure that it should be, shows that at this period she had not, in spite of her attempts to do so, altogether renounced the world. She was not contented with the usual stratagems, such as getting one critic after another to look through the story in manuscript, reading the whole or parts to select companies of friends, &c., &c.; no—she prepared its success in a more determined and thorough manner. Her first step was to write as follows to a friend in Paris, Dr. Gay, an unknown and vain member of the medical profession, in whose career she had promised to interest herself:—

". . . I have another favour to ask of you. Will you get some clever verse-writer to address a little poem to our friend Sidonie (Sidonie is the heroine in Madame de Krüdener's first short story). I need hardly ask you to be sure to see that this poem is in as good taste as possible. The heading is simply to be *À Sidonie.* Sidonie is to be asked: 'Why do you live in the country, depriving us by this retired life of your charm and your wit? Does the sensation you have created not call you to Paris? Only there will your charms and your talents be admired as they deserve. Your fascinating dancing has been described, but who is capable of describing all your attractions?' My friend, it is to your friendship I confide all this; I feel quite ashamed on Sidonie's behalf, for I know her modesty. You, too, know that she is not vain. I have more serious reasons than the gratification of petty vanity for asking you to have these verses written, and for my other actions. Be sure to say that she lives in great retirement, and that only in Paris is it possible to meet with appreciation. Take care to conceal that you have anything to do with this matter. Have the verses printed in the evening newspaper. It is quite true that Sidonie's dancing

is described in *Delphine*. Read the book; it will interest you. But remember, it is not to be mentioned in the verses that it is in *Delphine* she is described. It is only the heading, *À Sidonie*, that is to give any clue to the person to whom they are addressed. Be so kind as to pay the newspaper. I hope to be able to explain my reasons to you. Send me the number containing the verses as soon as it comes out. If the paper will not accept the verses, or if there is to be too long a delay in their appearance, send me the manuscript and I shall have them inserted in a newspaper here. You will be doing a great favour to your friend, and she will explain to you by word of mouth why she has asked it. You know her timidity, her love of solitude, and her dislike of praise; but it is an important service you are doing her."

A fortnight later we have another letter on the same subject, another request to know if Dr. Gay has read *Delphine:* "Madame de Staël told Sidonie that she would describe her dancing, and you will find the description in the first volume. Many people think that she has described Sidonie's face, way of speaking, and lively imagination, and mixed up with this her own religious and political opinions; for Sidonie is *profoundly religious*, and takes very little interest in politics." On this follow more directions with regard to the poem: "It must tell that her beautiful dancing has been described, without intimating by whom—must simply say: 'An able pen has depicted your dancing; the success you have met with everywhere is well known; your charms have been sung as well as your wit, and yet you persistently conceal them from the world. A solitary life in your home is your choice. There you seek happiness in religion, in nature, in study, &c., &c., &c.' This, dear friend, is what I want; I shall give you my reasons by-and-by."

The address to Sidonie arrives; Madame de Krüdener acknowledges its reception: "It is only fair, dear friend, that you should have a copy of the charming elegy you have written for me, so I herewith send you one; I wish to keep yours myself."

The elegy runs: "What is it you seek in your solitude? Paris, bewitched by the magic emanating from you, by your grace, by the brilliant talents with which Heaven has gifted you, surely offers you hearts enough, hearts which your gentle spirit has enchained. We saw you, we flocked round you on that day when you exercised the seductive power of grace and the constraining power of beauty, the day when, assured of the palm of genius, you did not despise the praises offered to talent. You even smiled upon a certain ingenious versifier who ventured to blend his weak voice with the chorus of the sages and to sketch your magic dance in words. But the memory of those festive days has been effaced by the thunderbolt which has fallen from heaven upon you! Do not our hearts share in your melancholy reflections? Have they not, devoutly silent, sighed with you in your sorrow? We would not offend you with impotent consolation, that paraded offering to a paraded sorrow—we heard you sigh, and we sighed with you. We sighed with you, and you flee from us! Why do you flee? We are decked in mourning weeds; the arts keep silence; love hides itself, and with it hide all its attendant gaieties, that of yore were your joy and your glory."

There is as much again, but this is enough. Madame de Krüdener's letter ends: "I send you this elegy, the antique colouring (!) and beauty of which I admire. I appropriate nothing in it except the sorrow, which you have correctly observed in me and have desired to alleviate. I have much more than this to say to you, dear Dr. Gay, much that is more flattering for you, but I cannot find room for it here, can only with a grateful heart offer my thanks to your art, your noble art, so beneficial to humanity (!)."

Dr. Gay then proceeded to rhyme his prose. Madame de Krüdener writes to him: "Sidonie has requested me to convey her heartfelt thanks to the kindest of friends. The verses are charming. They are already in print. What an enviably gifted man he is who wrote them! How easy it is to see that he is Sidonie's friend! How well he paints what he desires us to see! In every stroke one feels that it is the soul which has wielded the brush—and what a noble soul!

. . . Sidonie has also received an elegy in prose, which you must see, and which she considers exceedingly beautiful. What talent is displayed in the noble, simple style, and how one is drawn to the mind which speaks such a language! A few alterations have been made, very few; you have been most successful in doing what was desired!"

We observe that Sidonie was not content with writing out a rough draft of her own encomiums, but that she also corrected the fair copy. Such proceedings require no comment. The indefatigable doctor composes more poems, and receives requests to plague this, that, and the other critic. No importuning was required in the case of the pious historian, Michaud, who spent thirty years of his life in writing the history of the Crusades; it was rendered superfluous by the intimacy of his relations with the authoress; his criticism was an enthusiastic one. At last Madame de Krüdener is able to write to a friend: "My health is much improved; I have been at balls eight nights running without being the worse for it. What happiness! I cannot tell you, my friend, how much I am made of; poems are showered on me, I am overwhelmed with attentions, people dispute the privilege of a word with me. It is a thousand times more than I deserve; but *Providence loves to overwhelm its children with benefits*, even when they do not deserve them. . . . I should look upon it as cowardice not to publish a work which in my opinion is a useful one; therefore I regard the journey to Paris in the light of *a duty;* for my heart, my imagination, everything, draws me to the Lake of Geneva."

She went to Paris, and *Valérie* was published in December 1803. All Madame de Krüdener's guns were primed, ready to salute the book. Not one missed fire. All the bells of criticism tolled. Like a good general, she was on the field of battle herself. She drove incognito from one fashionable shop to another, asking for hats, or scarfs, or feathers, or wreaths, or ribbons *à la Valérie*. When this elegant and still beautiful lady drove up in her carriage and asked with such assurance for these articles of her own invention, the shopkeepers did their utmost to come to an understanding of what she wanted and to provide it. And when astonished

shop-girls denied the existence of such wares, Madame de Krüdener smiled so kindly and pitied them so much because they did not know *Valérie* that she quickly transformed them into eager canvassers of readers for her book. She drove on with her purchases to other shops, and in a few days had produced amongst the shopkeepers such a furious competition in articles *à la Valérie* that her friends, when they went at her instigation to ask for these wares, became innocent accomplices in her stratagem, and were constrained to bear witness to her triumph.

Now Madame de Krüdener writes to her friend: "The success of *Valérie* is complete and unprecedented. An acquaintance said to me the other day: 'There is something *supernatural* about such success.' Yes, my friend, it is the will of Heaven that this purer morality should be diffused throughout France, where as yet it is not so well understood."

Hardly had this feverish craving for celebrity been satisfied, this refinement of hypocrisy been brought to perfection, when Madame de Krüdener's genuine conversion took place. It came about in this wise. Sitting at the window of her house in Riga one day in 1805, she was in the act of bowing to one of the most favoured of her numerous admirers when the unfortunate man was seized with a fit of apoplexy and fell down dead. This incident preyed on her mind. Her melancholy, however, did not render her independent of earthly requirements, and she sent one day for a shoemaker to measure her for a pair of shoes. The man came. At first she hardly noticed him, but while he was kneeling in front of her she was struck by his happy expression. "Are you happy?" she asked him. "I am the happiest man in the world," was the reply. This shoemaker was one of the "awakened," a member of the community of Moravian Brethren. He had an aversion to work, and lived at home with his mother, Frau Blau, one of the worst religious hypocrites in Riga, who gained her livelihood by imposing upon the rich members of her sect. The sight of the shoemaker's happiness made such an impression on Madame de Krüdener's susceptible soul that she again and

again visited his mother and him. At their house she made acquaintance with many more of the Moravian Brethren, and was soon as enthusiastic a Christian believer as any one of them. A gradual, slow training in Christianity would not have been possible in her case, but the doctrine of sudden conversion and entire change of life was one well calculated to have a strong effect upon her, now that she was over forty.

The same ardour which she had exhibited in the passions of her youth she now expended on the passion of her maturer years. Both her words and actions are henceforth inspired by religious enthusiasm. She divides her time between devotional exercises and charitable deeds. Her whole previous life seems to her to have been nothing but error and foolishness. Her whole life now is but one feeling, love to her Saviour. "I have not a thought except to please, to serve, to sacrifice everything to Him through whose grace I desire nothing except to be allowed to love all my fellow-men, and who shows me nothing in the future but glimpses of bliss. Oh, if men but knew the happiness of religion, how they would shun every care except care for their souls!"

Such was Madame de Krüdener's state of mind when, travelling once more in the autumn of 1806, she met and became intimate with Queen Louisa of Prussia. It was not long after the battle of Jena. The Queen, in her deep dejection, was peculiarly open to the persuasion of Madame de Krüdener's glowing religious eloquence, and Madame de Krüdener gained great influence over her, and through her over the King. We have proof of this in a letter from the Queen written some time afterwards. "I owe to your kind heart a confession which I am certain will cause you to shed tears of joy. It is that you have made me better than I was. Your straightforward words when we talked together on the subject of religion and Christianity have made the deepest impression upon me."

Madame de Krüdener went to Karlsruhe on purpose to see Jung-Stilling. Jung-Stilling had made a literary reputation for himself by the book in which he gave an account of his early life as a pious journeyman tailor. As a medical

student at Strasburg he had associated with Goethe and won his favour. After practising successfully as an oculist, and holding a professorship of political economy, he had become a kind of prophet among the Pietists of South Germany, and was honoured as a saint by the pious court-circle and nobility of Baden. His character was not strong enough to stand such adulation, and he had degenerated into a vain and unreliable old twaddler, who boasted of his knowledge of the other world and revealed the hidden mysteries and designs of God by means of interpretations of the Revelation of St. John. To Jung-Stilling Madame de Krüdener now did homage as her master and guide. He had a weakness for the admiration of great ladies, and a close friendship sprang up between them. The venerable ghost-seer was at this time writing his *Theorie der Geisterkunde* (Theory of Spirits). Madame de Krüdener was firmly persuaded of the truth of one of his wise predictions, namely, that the millennium was to begin in the year 1816, or 1819 at latest.

Not long after this visit to Karlsruhe she met Queen Hortense, who was so fascinated by her that she gave her a private audience every morning. But it would seem that Madame de Krüdener ingratiated herself in this case chiefly by reading to the Queen the manuscript of a novel she was writing, *Othilde* by name, the pious moral of which did not prevent its being a "truly delicious" love-story.

She was now a pattern of every kind of Christian humility. When at Karlsruhe she climbed up to the dirtiest garrets to do deeds of charity. One day when she found a servant-girl crying in the street because she had been sent out to sweep, the great lady took the broom and swept the pavement herself.

The spiritual condition of Alsace at this time was somewhat remarkable. To some of its most intellectually advanced inhabitants the irreligion of the Revolution had communicated itself, but the great mass of the Protestant population had been terrified into a kind of religious mysticism, the distinctive feature of which was the belief in the near approach of the millennium. The most eminent

clergyman in Alsace was the universally respected Pastor Oberlin of Waldbach, a man of the most sincere piety, who was, however, crazy enough to draw maps of the kingdom of heaven and publish a plan of the heavenly Jerusalem. He knew the exact order of precedence of the blessed dead, and was in regular communication with departed friends. Madame de Krüdener, provided with letters of introduction to this gentleman and others of the same persuasion, made her appearance in Alsace.

She had heard that a German pastor at Markirch, named Fontaines, had the power of working miracles, and that in his house lived a famous prophetess, Marie Kummer (generally known as "die Kummerin"), a hysterical Würtemberg peasant woman, who held constant communication with angels, and in her trances revealed the will of God. And she had also been told that Fontaines had expressed a wish to make the acquaintance of the divinely inspired lady from the North whom Marie Kummer had seen in a vision. In June 1808 Madame de Krüdener arrived at his house. He welcomed her solemnly on the threshold with the words of John to Jesus: "Art thou that one that should come, or do we look for another?" Flattered and delighted, Madame de Krüdener remained under the roof of this man, who was now generally supposed to be her lover. They spent their time in the study of the Revelation of St. John, and every day the lady listened to Marie Kummer's prophecies of the high mission and the great future awaiting her, and also Fontaines, who was to be her apostle. She wrote to a friend: "I am the happiest creature in the world. . . . The fulness of time is at hand; great calamities are about to happen, but you need not be afraid. The kingdom of the Lord is near, and He Himself will reign upon the earth for a thousand years." She goes on to say: "Imagine that I have literally *experienced miracles*. You have no conception of the happiness felt by those who give themselves entirely to Jesus Christ. He in His goodness and mercy has given me the distinct promise that He will answer the prayers I offer for my relations and friends."

It is not to be denied that the language in which she describes this new ardent devotion has a suspicious similarity to the language of a love which is not at all heavenly. Of God she writes: "It is impossible for me to tell what tenderness burns in my heart, how many tears I shed, what words tremble through my whole being when I feel myself loved thus—I, poor worm of the earth! I said to God the other day: 'What can I say to Thee, O my Beloved! (*O mon bien-aimé!*) Would that I could shout over the whole earth, and through all the heavens, how much I love Thee! Would that I could lead not only all men, but all the rebel spirits back to Thee!"

In the Vatican hangs a picture by a modern Italian painter which represents a nun kneeling at the feet of Christ, who returns her tearful gaze with the tenderest of glances. One involuntarily thinks of this picture when reading Madame de Krüdener's outbursts during her period of divine intoxication. She writes on another occasion: "All we have to do is to love, and to persuade others to love, the kindest, the best, the tenderest of all fathers." During her pious wanderings about the country, preaching and converting, she was joined by a young missionary. He was one of the many in whom she was afterwards disappointed, but shortly after he came to her she describes their feelings when worshipping together in such words as these: "What emotion! Can you imagine the bliss of our communions? No language can express it. We could not even hear the words spoken." It is impossible in reading this not to think of a passage in the writings of one of Madame de Krüdener's early admirers: "Lezay prétend (dit Chênedollé) que Madame de Krüdener dans les moments les plus décisifs avec son amant fait une prière à Dieu, en disant: Mon Dieu, que je suis heureuse! Je vous demande pardon de l'excès de mon bonheur?" He adds: "Elle reçoit ce sacrifice comme une personne qui va recevoir sa communion."[1] Similar pious emotionalism is, however, common to all the mystics of the day.

Madame de Krüdener did not know that both Fontaines

[1] A manuscript of Chênedollé's, quoted by Sainte-Beuve in *Derniers Portraits*, p. 290.

and Marie Kummer had a past which was anything but confidence-inspiring.

At the outbreak of the Revolution Fontaines, then aged twenty, was a violent Jacobin ; during the Reign of Terror he cast in his lot with Eulogius Schneider, and was one of the most eager of that man's followers in denouncing the clergy, closing churches, plundering Strasburg Cathedral, &c. He held orations in the temples of Reason, got himself appointed a Protestant pastor, married, and behaved in such a scandalous manner that he was compelled to give up his charge. Nevertheless, when the reaction against the Revolution set in, he received another call, as representative of the extremest Pietism, and soon gained a great reputation as an exorciser of evil spirits. When it came out that he had managed in three years (1801–4) to make away with almost all the means of his congregation, he had to retire into obscurity for a time. In 1805 he received a call to Markirch. There, two years later, he took Marie Kummer into his house. This woman, though she was a simple vagrant, and had changed her religion several times, was held in great reverence by the Pietists. A certain Pastor Hiller consecrated her to be the bride of Jesus. In the course of time she bore this same pastor a son, who was destined, they declared, to become the witness mentioned in the third verse of the eleventh chapter of the Book of Revelation. The worldly-minded civil authorities none the less condemned Marie to the pillory and a term of imprisonment. When she came out of prison she proclaimed the end of the world to be at hand, and advised a general emigration of believers to the Holy Land. She actually persuaded a number of foolish persons to set out with her for Jerusalem, and to entrust her with the travelling funds ; but when they reached Vienna she was taken into custody. After a term of imprisonment there she went back to Alsace. The comet of 1807 furnished her with a pretext for sensational prophecies of plague, famine, and war, and on hearing the report of the arrival of the Russian baroness she had a vision, in which that lady's high destiny was revealed to her.

When Madame de Krüdener had lived in the edifying company of Fontaines and Marie Kummer for fully eight months, Fontaines began to feel that he was no longer safe in Markirch. Tales of his past life were being circulated. Marie Kummer consequently had a vision in which she received a divine command to go to Würtemberg and found a colony of true Christians there. The three at once set out. At their religious meetings in Würtemberg Fontaines was always dressed in black, Madame de Krüdener in blue, and Marie in grey. Besides prophesying the approaching end of the world they incautiously inveighed against the ungodly sovereign of the country, who had introduced a new liturgy. This led to Marie's imprisonment and the banishment of the other two. Marie joined Fontaines and Madame de Krüdener in Baden as soon as she was released, and there they again lived in intimate companionship, occupying themselves as before with devotional exercises and prophesying.

Madame de Krüdener, called to Riga by her mother's last illness, held meetings there too, at which she interpreted the Book of Revelation and dispensed the sacrament. At these meetings she was assisted by the pious shoemaker's pious mother, Frau Blau, in her character of prophetess. Towards the close of the year 1811 Madame de Krüdener returned to Karlsruhe. Fontaines had by this time been ordered off, but she continued to work in company with Marie Kummer, who was looked up to as a great prophetess because she had foretold the victory of the white over the black angel, and had announced that the people from the north of whom Jeremiah had written would presently make their appearance. The Russian war established her reputation, and after the news of the conflagration of Moscow came she was regarded as a positively sacred personage.

There is not the slightest doubt that Madame de Krüdener was entirely persuaded of the purity of her motives, and that she acted in all sincerity. She is not merely converted herself; she is possessed by a passion for converting. Again and again the idea of converting the very denizens of hell and the devil himself occurs to her. It was but natural that she had to bear much and painful misunder-

standing on the part of those who were unable to believe in the change that had taken place in her. Even her own mother despised her and stopped writing to her. But no misunderstanding cooled her enthusiasm, which made an impression even upon rationalists. One of these, Sonntag, the chief dignitary of the Livonian church, who had carefully observed her behaviour at Riga in 1811, wrote many years afterwards that, though in his official capacity he had been obliged to sever his connection with her, he owed it to her to bear witness that she showed the deepest, purest, most active, most self-forgetful and self-sacrificing sympathy with every suffering and need of humanity.

Soon she, too, receives the gift of prophecy. It was not an uncommon gift at this time. Both De Maistre and Bonald prophesied the restoration of the royal family many years in advance, thereby winning considerable renown. But whenever their prophecies are of a more definite nature, it happens with them as with the prophecies of old—they do not come to pass. De Maistre, for instance, writing on the subject of the proposed seat of government in America, says: "I may safely wager ten to one that the town will not be built, or that it will not be called Washington, or that the Congress will not meet there;" which three things all happened. In 1807 he wrote (*Opuscules*, p. 98): "Nothing can restore the power of Prussia. This famous edifice, built of blood, filth, false coin, and pamphlets, has collapsed in one moment and is gone for ever." He also prophesied that the restoration of the Bourbons would take place quite peacefully, without foreign interference, and that autocratic rule and the power of the aristocracy would in the end be strengthened by the Revolution, &c., &c. Some of Bonald's prophecies (in his *Théorie du Pouvoir*) were rather more successful, for the simple reason that he who prophesies the end of the transient, prophesies what is certain to come true some day; there are things concerning the future to which Horatio's words apply: "There needs no ghost come from the grave to tell us this."

But Madame de Krüdener's prophecies attracted more attention than those of any of her contemporaries. In

October 1814 she wrote from Strasburg to a lady at the Russian court: "We shall soon witness the punishment of guilty France, a punishment which Providence would have spared it if it had continued to bow beneath the cross." How was it possible, after Napoleon's return from Elba, to interpret this otherwise than as a mysterious prevision of this return?

She also wrote: "The storm is approaching; the lilies which the Eternal had preserved—the pure, delicate, symbolic flowers which had been crushed by a sceptre of iron, because such was the will of the Eternal—those lilies, which ought to have pled their cause before the tribunal of the purity and love of God, have only shown themselves to disappear." What could this be but a prophecy of the flight of Louis XVIII.?

The fame of these predictions sped over Europe. One of the first to hear of them was Czar Alexander. Worn out by the campaigns of 1813 and 1814, tormented by an uneasy conscience, grieved by the sudden death of his only child and by the desertion of its mother, a lady who had been his mistress for eleven years, but whose affections were now transferred to one of his aides-de-camp, enfeebled by excesses of every kind, Alexander was exactly in the condition to be influenced by pious mysticism.[1]

He had been brought up without any religious education whatever. When, during his depression after the capture of Moscow, Prince Galitzin recommended him to seek comfort in the study of the Bible, such a thing as a Russian Bible was not to be found in the Winter Palace, and he had to be contented for the time with a French translation of the Vulgate. The proceedings at the Congress of Vienna, the faithlessness of Austria, the ingratitude of France, and the animosity aroused by his favourite project, the rehabilitation of Poland, in that country itself, had completely shaken his faith in human nature. The surprise of Napoleon's return from Elba had shaken his nerves. From the moment of his mistress's desertion he came under the influence of his wife, the Empress Elizabeth, who in her deserted condition

[1] Chateaubriand, *Congrès de Vérone*, i. 147.

had long ago taken refuge in melancholy mysticism. She persuaded him when he was at Karlsruhe to visit Jung-Stilling and learn what was his opinion of the political situation, viewed from the standpoint of the Book of Revelation. Jung-Stilling assured him that Napoleon was none other than the Apollyon mentioned in the ninth chapter of that book, and that the millennium was at hand.

In 1814, at the court of Baden, Madame de Krüdener had made the acquaintance of the Czarina, and since then the ardent prophetess had carried on a correspondence with one of Elizabeth's maids of honour who had an enthusiastic admiration for the Czar, with the full intention that her letters should be shown to him. Certain sentences in them were unmistakably written for his reading, such as the following: "What you tell me of the Czar's great and noble qualities I have long known. I know, too, that the Lord will grant me the happiness of seeing him—that the Prince of Darkness will in vain endeavour to prevent our meeting. I have much to say to the Czar." Immediately after the despatch of the letter here quoted from, Madame de Krüdener moved to Heilbronn; the Russian headquarters were presently transferred there, and late in the evening of the 4th of June 1815, heedless of the aide-de-camp's rebuffs, she made her way, unannounced, into the Czar's presence, and remained closeted with him for three hours. When she left him, Alexander's eyes were full of tears, and he was much agitated. Soon her influence over him was complete. They would shut themselves up together for half a day at a time, praying, reading the Bible, and discussing theological problems.

The days immediately preceding the battle of Waterloo they spend at Heidelberg, occupied in studying the Psalms. The intelligence of the reverses at Ligny and Quatre-Bras on the 16th and 17th of June reaches Alexander when he is thus employed; the Psalms console him and convince him of the justice of his cause. He prays and fasts. On the 18th of June the battle of Waterloo is fought. Alexander immediately sets out for Paris, but with the understanding that Madame de Krüdener is to follow promptly. His

greatest grief at this moment is that his brother Constantine is not converted too. Before leaving Heidelberg our prophetess visits the prisoners who are awaiting their sentence of death and preaches to them with great effect ; then she follows the Czar, whose Christian disposition affords her intense satisfaction.

In Paris her influence reaches its culminating point. The Czar calls upon her on the evening of her arrival. Her apartments in the Hôtel Montchenu are so situated that he can come to her at any hour of the day from the Élysée-Bourbon Palace by a private garden door. No dissipation, no amusement had now any temptation for the man whom the Parisians remembered as being so gay but a few years previously. "I am a disciple of Christ," he said ; "I go about with the Gospel in my hands, and know nothing else." And Madame de Krüdener writes of him: "Alexander is the elect of God. He is treading the path of renunciation." Only language borrowed from the Apocalypse could express what she saw in him—a founder of the kingdom of Christ upon earth, an angel of peace with the flaming sword of power, the prince of light, &c., &c. Napoleon, on the other hand, she, like Adam Müller and his followers, believed to be the devil himself. Alexander was to restore the power of Christianity upon earth, and to obliterate the last trace of the Revolution and its deeds.

Alexander's reverence and gratitude knew no bounds. In the beginning of September a great review of 150,000 Russian troops was held at the Camp des Vertus in Champagne. Madame de Krüdener's presence could not be dispensed with. The Czar's carriage was sent for her early in the morning, and he received her, not like a favourite subject, but like a messenger from heaven, sent to lead his troops to victory. "Bare-headed, or wearing the little straw-hat which she generally carried hanging from her arm ; her still fair hair hanging in plaits upon her shoulders, with a stray curl falling on her brow ; dressed in a plain, dark robe, to which its cut and her bearing imparted elegance, and which was confined at the waist by a simple

girdle—thus she arrived at dawn of day, thus she stood at the moment of prayer in front of the astonished army."[1]

About a year before this Alexander had read a book by the German mystic Franz von Baader, *On the Necessity Produced by the Revolution for a New and More Intimate Connection between Religion and Politics*. Under its influence he had formed a vague project for uniting the Christian monarchs of Europe in a mysterious alliance, which was to be in a very special manner commended to the protection of God; but at Vienna he had been obliged to give up all thoughts of carrying this project into effect. Now he discussed it with Madame de Krüdener. She entered into it eagerly, declaring that she herself had already, by the grace of God, conceived the very same idea. And who dare say that it is impossible or even unlikely that such an idea as this, *the plan of the Holy Alliance*, should have originated in the brain of a poor, silly woman, whose head had been turned by the amours of her youth and the religious enthusiasm of her later years? It is, as a matter of fact, more than probable that Europe and civilisation owe their thanks to her for it. A man who is distinctly inclined to undervalue her influence, and who is wrong where he denies it, Queen Louisa of Prussia's beloved brother, the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, writes: "Madame de Krüdener never exercised the smallest influence over my angelic sister of Prussia, nor yet over the King, her husband, who judged this lamentably famous woman perfectly correctly. Of the Emperor Alexander she had, on the contrary, taken such complete possession that the Holy Alliance, which he proposed and succeeded in forming, may be regarded as entirely her work; you may be sure that I should not say this unless I were certain of it."

Some days after her arrival in Paris, Alexander said to Madame de Krüdener: "I am leaving France; but before my departure I shall publish a manifesto, acknowledging our gratitude to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for His protection, and calling on all nations to unite in common submission to the Gospel." With these words he handed her a paper. It was the draft of the compact

[1] Sainte-Beuve, from the account of an eye-witness.

between the three sovereigns. Capefigue, who actually saw this document, writes: "I have lying before me the rough draft of the compact; it is from beginning to end in the Emperor Alexander's handwriting, with corrections by Madame de Krüdener. The words *The Holy Alliance* are written by that extraordinary woman." Thus even the name is of her devising. She chose it with a reference to the prophecies of the end of the world in the Book of the Prophet Daniel.

Having traced this woman's career from the very beginning, we know who and what she was; we have also some idea of what the Revolution was; consequently our first feeling is one of astonishment that these pious maxims and reminiscences of the Apocalypse written, with the same pen which wrote the Elegy to Sidonie, by the lady who a few years before was buying scarfs and hats *à la Valérie*, should have had power to stem the renewed impetus of the current of the Revolution for fifteen years. Not for fifteen years did inevitable evolution, the progress of science, the audacity of art, the rebellion of hearts, take shape in action which broke the charm.

The three monarchs "solemnly declare, in the name of the most holy and indivisible Trinity, that their intention in the present proclamation is to assert in face of the universe their irrevocable determination to be guided, both in the government of their own dominions and in their political relations with other governments, entirely by the rules of justice, love, and truth contained in the Christian religion. Far from being only applicable in private life, these prescriptions ought directly to influence the conduct of rulers, as indicating the only means of placing the institutions of society on a solid foundation and remedying their imperfections."

So much for the words of the compact. What was really sincere and benevolent intention on the part of the foolish imperial enthusiast was sagacious hypocrisy on that of his brother monarchs. Who does not know the rest? Who does not know what the Holy Alliance came to mean —the introduction of a general European reaction, in essence barbarism, in its outward form a lie? It was in the name

of the Holy Alliance that, during the saddest decades of our century, even the very feeblest endeavours in the direction of intellectual and political liberty were checked or crushed.

The Alliance received the voluntary adhesion of the potentate who had most to gain from it, the Pope. Without any petty consideration of his own position as head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pius lauded to the skies the resolution of his compeers — Alexander, the Greek Pope ; the King of Prussia, the Lutheran Pope ; and the King of England, the Anglican Pope. At the Congress of Vienna he proposed a plan of restoration in comparison with which the dreams of all the reactionaries of other days paled and all previous attempts to restore pre-Revolutionary conditions sank into nothingness. With one stroke of the pen the existence of the Revolution and the Empire was blotted out. The Holy Roman Empire was to be restored, and along with it all the social conditions and institutions of the Middle Ages—tithes, church property, exemption of the clergy from taxation, and the Inquisition.

The last years of Madame de Krüdener's life present no events of historical interest. She became ever more sincerely and fanatically religious, and her desire to display her faith in deeds became ever more ardent. It was now the one desire of her heart and object of her life to help the poor and the sick. She preached to the poor, founded churches, and proclaimed the advent of the kingdom of God. But from the moment when her Christianity took a practical form the character of her position changed. The royal personages, the authorities, all the great, who as long as she remained the court lady had smiled upon her, instinctively divined an enemy in her as soon as she began to address herself to the people. On one occasion she traversed Switzerland from frontier to frontier in a sort of mad religious triumphal procession ; the next time she visited that country she was driven out of one town after the other. At Basle, where she distributed tracts among the soldiers and according to her own account converted half the garrison, the infuriated clergy succeeded in having her expelled

from the town. In Baden, where her charities during a famine were truly munificent, her house was surrounded by gendarmes, and the people who had sought refuge with her were dispersed. She was expelled from Lucerne by the police authorities. When she tried to make her way into France through Alsace, she was turned back, and was at the same time forbidden to return to Baden. She was finally conducted under police escort to the Russian frontier, being passed on by the Würtemberg to the Bavarian, by the Bavarian to the Saxon, by the Saxon to the Prussian police, and by these last handed over to the authorities of her own country. She had lost Alexander's favour for ever, partly because she had been much too communicative about the origin of the Holy Alliance, partly because of the mixed and often bad company in which she travelled about. The accounts which she gave in her religious periodicals and pamphlets of social evils, of the boundless distress of the poor and the unjust oppressions of their rulers, were denounced as socialism and communism. Christianity as she understood it could not but be obnoxious to the authorities. She was, moreover, foolish enough to express her enthusiastic sympathy with the Greek war of independence in a very incautious manner, and presumptuous enough to declare openly that the Emperor, as founder of the Holy Alliance, was in duty bound to place himself in the forefront of a crusade against Turkey. Cast off by Alexander, she left St. Petersburg, and from this time onwards lived, as a missionary, a life of self-inflicted penance. She underwent all kinds of hardships, suffering voluntarily herself, and alleviating the sufferings of others whenever it was possible. She died in 1824 while on a missionary expedition in the Crimea.

An interesting contrast to the French-Russian Madame de Krüdener is to be found in the German-Russian Princess Galizin, a lady who belongs to the end of the eighteenth, as Madame de Krüdener does to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Madame de Krüdener's characteristics stand out more sharply on such a background as the life of Madame de Galizin. The Princess's is a genuinely German type

of character. She is as simple as her younger contemporary is polished and complex ; she is ingenuous and at the same time sentimental, full of soul and wanting in drain-power. Her husband was, like Krüdener, a man of the world. He was a friend and admirer of Diderot ; it was, indeed, Diderot who first inspired the Princess with the desire and the courage to study, but she soon became that philosopher's ardent opponent. As careless of her feminine attractions as Madame de Krüdener was coquettish, Madame de Galizin had her head shaved to make it impossible for her to go into society, and from the age of twenty-four lived a life of seclusion. To cure herself entirely of egoism she "offered to the God of love the sacrifice of her understanding." As an instance of her ignorance of the world it may be mentioned that, when her son desired to enter the military service of a foreign country, she applied first to the Prussian, then to the Austrian commander-in-chief for permission to send along with him a tutor who was to guard him against the irregular habits of military life, and was astonished by receiving the answer from both that it was impossible for an officer to join the army accompanied by a male governess of this description.

In spite of Princess Galizin's warm-hearted sincerity, her tone is as pietistically supernatural as Madame de Krüdener's is mystically sensual.[1]

In Madame de Krüdener we have before us a being whose original equipment would seem to mark her as destined to act some important part. She possesses a vigour of life and a vividness of emotion sufficient for two ordinary

[1] Katerkamp, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Leben der Fürstinn Amalia von Gallitzin*, Münster, 1828.

The best idea of her religious enthusiasm is to be gained from such a production as the following beautiful little poem :—

GEBET DER LIEBE.

Liebe ! lehre uns beten, dass uns erhöre die Liebe.
O der Liebe vereintes Gebet ist Quelle der Liebe,
Quelle des ewigen Lebens und unaussprechlicher Wonne !
Schwester, rufe mir zu : "O Bruder ! Bitten der Liebe
Sende dem Vater für mich—ich sende Bitten der Liebe
Täglich dem Vater für dich." O Schwester ! der Bitten nicht eine
Kann an die Liebe, von Liebe, für Liebe umsonst seyn.

human beings; only it is not healthy vigour and emotion, but an inward restlessness, an inward fire, which gives out sparks incessantly on every side. There is in her an original capital of Russian volatility and pliability, German sentimentality, French sense of proportion, and "Asiatic" sensual charm.

She enters life with no thorough education behind her, no serious aim before her, with a strong craving for happiness, and a poetic turn — predestined, therefore, to live in illusions. When she finds herself surrounded by admirers she gives herself up to dizzy enjoyment of this gratification, and begins to regard herself as a superior being. As long as she preserves outward fidelity to her husband she lives in the illusion that she is the heroine of duty. When she becomes unfaithful, she chooses a new model, and is transformed in her own estimation into another ideal, the ideal fair sinner. She writes of the ladies of Geneva, that they have neither the charm of virtue nor "the charm of sin." This latter she herself acquired. She continued to be ideal in so far as it is ideal to be the first of one's own species, unique. On this supposition of her own ideality is founded her belief that it was she who brought happiness (orders and titles) to her husband.

All illusion consists in a wrong association of cause and effect—religious illusion like the rest. But religious illusion is a double illusion; the individual subject to it does not trace the effect to its cause, but to a vague origin, the centre of existence—illusion number one—and in the centre of existence he places, not, as he imagines, the Deity, but himself—illusion number two. The beautiful wife believes that her husband receives his decorations direct from God, but also that she herself is the cause of God's bestowing them. She is the real cause, God is the means by which she works. She continues to lead her gay life as long as it continues to provide her with illusions. But a clever woman, with highly-strung nerves, tires in the long run of such a life, tires of the new admirer's jealousy of his predecessor, and of fooling herself and another for, say, the tenth time with the words: "You are the only man I have ever loved." After this life has lost its illusions,

and existence for the time being its charm, the possibility of a new illusion presents itself. Madame de Krüdener regards the apoplectic shock which killed her lover in the same light as St. Augustine, Pascal, and Luther regarded similar occurrences. It is a hint, a warning to her. The happy shoemaker tells her of his certainty of being one of the elect of God. When she learns the secret of his happiness, she resolves that she too will be one of the elect.

Faith in God is in her case the satisfaction of the desire to be elect, to be the chosen one. She believes herself to be converted, and is, at the bottom of her heart, what she was. When she puts into the mouth of the Deity the words in which He assures her of His love, what is she doing but once again writing letters and elegies to Sidonie? The echo of her own self-adoration sounds to her like a voice from heaven, and she thanks God now as she did before for being thus distinguished—by herself. What she desires now as before is to be loved. As Chateaubriand proceeded to his earthly Alhambra via the earthly Jerusalem, she seeks her heavenly Alhambra by the way of the heavenly Zion. The only difference in their cases is, that he wishes to deceive others; she deceives herself. She is a coquette; so is he, and so is Lamartine; they are haughty coquettes, and she is a humble one.

What chiefly distinguishes her from them is, however, not her character, but her gifts and her feminine nature. Chateaubriand, as a man, has at least a sufficient glimmering of science to make it impossible for him to be imposed on by miracle-workers and village sibyls. Madame de Krüdener is a woman, and in a reactionary age the definition holds good: Woman is the natural prey of the priests. Destitute of any scientific basis of thought, she sooner or later, except in rare, unusually favourable circumstances, becomes a prey to her enthusiasm, which does not know on what to expend itself, to her vague longings after she knows not what, to her cowardice, which is terrified by the calamities of life, to her various illusions; and all these powers—enthusiasm, longing, fear, and imagination—deliver up their victim bound hand and foot as a prey to the Church, whose authority has,

moreover, been imprinted upon her soul by her education from her earliest youth. Such was the case with Madame de Krüdener. All that she comes into contact with of the intellectual life of her day—its great wars of liberation, its research, its philosophy, its enthusiasm for enlightenment—passes by her without being understood ; the one quality of the spirit of her age that she understands and appropriates is its dissoluteness. When the reaction against the 18th century sets in, and it is, naturally, first and foremost taxed with impiety and frivolity, Madame de Krüdener immediately joins in the cry, because she herself has had no eyes for anything else in it, has comprehended nothing in it but its frivolousness and loose morality.

The reaction gains strength ; it soon has a literature of its own, a literature treating of all those supernatural things which the authors persuade their readers that they believe in. They write whole volumes about thrones and principalities, cherubim and seraphim ; they appear to be in sober earnest, but it never occurs to them that any human being will take them seriously. After any amount of ability has been displayed in the championing of tradition, there appears a woman who is simple enough to take everything literally, to believe that Marie Kummer has talked with angels, and that Fontaines has had such supernatural visions as it was the height of the fashion to describe in verse. Poets had begun to hymn the praises of the miracle-worker and the prophet—a poor naïve Magdalen takes them at their word, believes in the miracles which are shown her, and tries her hand at prophesying. We are preparing to shake our heads with a smile, when we perceive that the powers of the day are taking her seriously. She herself becomes a power. Chateaubriand, who neither believes in her nor with her, but who believes in her influence, tries to gain her support for his political projects, but in vain. She has but one desire, to restore to Christianity that authority which the Revolution had destroyed. In her eyes the Revolution has only accomplished one deed, the overthrow of sacred tradition ; she, for her part, desires to do only the one, opposite, deed

—to give back to Christianity its world-overshadowing power.

Alexander takes up the idea; the other powers adopt it as a useful political lever. As long as her sole desire is to vindicate the *authority* of Christianity, as long as she aims at improving and converting the nations *from above*, and in concert with their sovereigns, Madame de Krüdener stands upon the pinnacle of honour and glory. But the revulsion comes. The consistent development of her religious tendency compels her to attempt a conversion of the nations *from below*, to go forth among them and, after the manner of the old apostles, practise Christianity in action instead of merely proclaiming it as doctrine. What childishness! So naïve is she that she believes the potentates will regard her new endeavours with the same favour which they showed to her earlier ones. She does not understand that authority dreads all interference with its own principle except official interference. From the moment when she begins really to act as a Christian, she is treated as a revolutionist. In the feeling of the universal brotherhood of humanity which inspires her, and in the enthusiasm with which she pleads the cause of the poor and the oppressed, the champions of authority see proof that she is—a socialist and a communist.

And thus it fell to Madame de Krüdener's lot to give practical proof of what the rehabilitation of Christianity as authority meant. For it was only as *authority*, as *power*, as *order*, that Christianity was wanted. It was employed as the police, the army, the prisons were employed, to keep everything quiet and support the principle of authority. From the moment when it began to be regarded as a personal matter, as a thing in itself, and to be practised in a manner which threatened to produce social disturbances, from that moment it was *disorder*, and the authorities expedited it, in the person of Madame de Krüdener, as promptly as possible from frontier to frontier.[1]

[1] Charles Eynard, *Vie de Madame Krüdener*, vols. i. and ii.; Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits de Femmes; Derniers Portraits; Deutsche Rundschau* for November and December 1899.

IX

LYRIC POETRY: LAMARTINE AND HUGO

When the Hundred Days were over, and Louis XVIII. had returned for the second time, a mixed feeling, in which melancholy was the chief ingredient, took possession of the French people. Their king's first return had partaken of the appearance of a recall by the nation. But, seeing that he himself had made no attempt whatever to resist Napoleon with the troops which remained faithful to him, it was not possible to disguise the fact that he had been brought back by the bayonets of foreign armies. Hence in the eyes of the great majority his second accession bore the appearance of a humiliation inflicted upon France. But, on the other hand, it meant the restoration of lawful liberty after the terrible military despotism under which France had now sighed for so many years.

To literature the restoration of the monarchy was, to all appearance at least, a herald of liberty. After the lapse of twenty-five years, free discussion of ideas was again possible. The heavy hand which had lain so crushingly on the press had been removed. The fettered intellects and suppressed ideas were free to bestir themselves ; men were at liberty to investigate into and judge the past, the Empire as well as the Revolution ; and no great hindrances were placed in the way of their deliberating the future of France.

They were free to do it, but had they any inclination ? If they had, it was of the slightest. The mood of France was the mood which follows on a long illness or on a war which has ended in defeat. Not that men longed for redress on the field of battle. Towards the close of Napoleon's reign no echo was awakened in their hearts when the cannon in

front of the Invalides proclaimed a victory. They longed for peace, as the sick man, exhausted by blood-letting, longs for rest.

To Frenchmen the idea of living a long, peaceful life once more became a familiar one. For years mothers had trembled when they saw their sons approaching the age of manhood, that is to say, the age at which they became first soldiers and ere long corpses; now they began to hope that these sons had a long life before them. The youths, to whom in their boyhood the rattle of drums and blare of trumpets had been familiar sounds, who even at school had accustomed themselves to the thought of early won honour and an early death, were now obliged to familiarise themselves with the idea of life in time of peace. The natural death to which they now looked forward seemed hideous in comparison with death as it had displayed itself to them heretofore, gloriously beautiful in the purple of victory; what was almost a feeling of disappointment came over them, and they began to brood. Most of the young men who had so long been forced to sacrifice their personal life to the life of the State, the requirements of war, the general aims of their country, welcomed with delight the news that they might break the ranks, and were no longer bound to walk in step behind the drum; they shook the dust of the highways off their feet, threw off their uniforms, and tried to banish every remembrance of military discipline. Coming straight from the battle-fields of the Empire, from the noise and bloodshed of war, they took refuge in the quietness of a country life, far from the bustle and uproar of human crowds. Such was the mood of the moment—a wearied, but complex mood. There was disappointment in it, and hope, and inclination to personal day dreaming. It was not a mood favourable to action, but to brooding, reflection, deliberation.

This national mood explains how it was possible for such poetry as Lamartine's *Les Méditations* to become the favourite literature of the day. No book since Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme* had made such a sensation as did the First Part of this work; 45,000 copies of it were

sold in four years. Strange as it may seem to us now, the Restoration period found in Lamartine's poetry an interpretation of its feelings and of all that moved its inmost heart—a picture of its ideal longings, painted in the clearest, loveliest dream-colours. It was poetry that resembled the music of an Æolian harp, but the wind that played upon the strings was the spirit of the age. The poems were not so much songs as reflections, not so much heart as spirit harmonies; but in real life there had for long been enough, and more than enough, of the positive—definite forms, decided characters, solid substance, silent acceptance of the strokes of fate. It was by no means considered a fault that there was no strong passion in the poems, no tendency to see the dark and dreadful sides of life, or, in fact, life as it is. There had been enough of all this in reality. After a period during which so many instincts had been forcibly suppressed, men rejoiced in this purely poetic instinct, in this most melodious poet, who had, as he himself said, a chord for every feeling and mood. They longed for just such lyric restfulness after philosophy, revolution, and wars without end. The poem *Le Lac* was read with delight by the whole French-speaking world, just because it was so long since men had felt in sympathy with nature, so long since they had looked at the face of the earth from any point of view but the tactical one. It was not only, however, as the poet of feeling that Lamartine represented the spirit of the day; he also represented it in his character of orthodox Christian. The leading note in his poetry was the note of Christian royalism, and devotion to the Bourbon family in particular.

To us, who are acquainted with a Lamartine in whom the Revolution of 1848 seemed to find its incarnation, a Lamartine who was universally regarded as a prophet of humanism, it is of interest to examine the poet's spiritual starting-point.

Alphonse de Lamartine was born at Mâcon in 1790, of a family belonging to the ranks of the lesser nobility. His father was one of the king's last faithful adherents at the time of the Revolution, and suffered for his devotion.

Alphonse's loving, pious mother taught him to read in an illustrated Bible. He thus received his first literary and artistic impressions from scenes in the lives of the Patriarchs, the stories of Joseph and Samuel, of Sarah, and of Tobias and the Angel. After 1794 the family lived a very retired life upon small means on their little property of Milly. The son was at first taught at home by an amiable abbé, then sent to a school at Lyons, the rough, coarse tone of which was terribly repellent to a boy of a naturally refined disposition. By his mother's and his own wish he was removed to a school at Belley, kept by certain Jesuits who had managed to elude the laws banishing them from France, and who called themselves *Fathers of the Faith.* Here young Lamartine felt himself inexpressibly happy. The teachers were kind and refined; one of them reminded him of Fénélon; in the present century the Jesuits are undoubtedly not only the most unscrupulous, but also the most amiable, cleverest, and consequently most dangerous of all ecclesiastics. Amongst his fellow-pupils Lamartine soon found friends of his own standing, scions of French and Sardinian noble families. Among these were a young Alfieri, young Virieu, who, as V., plays a part in Graziella, and a nephew of Joseph de Maistre, Louis de Vignet. Through de Vignet Lamartine made acquaintance with all the members of the famous de Maistre family; Count Joseph attracted him least as a personality, but influenced him both by letters and by his works.

One day at Belley a master read some passages of Chateaubriand to the boys. The grandeur and charm of the majestic style made the deepest impression upon Lamartine, who had never heard anything like it before. But he declares in his Memoirs that he almost immediately assumed a critical attitude; he fell, he says, into a frenzy of admiration, but "not into a frenzy of bad taste." And he maintains that he presently, in talking to his comrades about the *Génie du Christianisme*, summed up his objections in the following pronouncement: "The main element in all perfect beauty, naturalness, is wanting. It is beautiful; but it is too beautiful." In other words, Lamartine, who himself

wrote so instinctively, thought Chateaubriand's style strained. It is probable that he slightly antedates this criticism. In any case his admiration was such that as late as 1824, when hymning the consecration of Charles X., he wrote :—

L' Archevêque.

Et ce preux chevalier qui sur l'écu d'airain
Porte au milieu des lis la croix du pélerin,
Et dont l'œil, rayonnant de gloire et de génie,
Contemple du passé la pompe rajeunie ?

Le Roi.

Chateaubriand ! Ce nom à tous les temps répond ;
L'avenir au passé dans son cœur se confond :
Et la France des preux et la France nouvelle
Unissent sur son front leur gloire fraternelle.

Tasso was another poet whom Alphonse read with enthusiastic admiration. Ossian taught him that it is possible for true poetry to be vague and misty. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, with his sweetness and his harmony, was Lamartine's, as well as Madame de Krüdener's, favourite model.

Some of the entertaining and immoral books of the eighteenth century which fell into the boy's hands delighted him, and excited his youthful imagination for a short time, but these impressions were effaced by those of the Jesuit school. A combination of religious enthusiasm and delight in the freshness and beauty of nature purified his mind and inspired it with activity.

"Were I to live a thousand years," he writes in his Memoirs, "I should never forget those days of study, those hours of prayer, those nights spent in meditation, and the raptures of joy with which I fulfilled my duties, thinking all the time of God." And almost in the same breath he tells of the bliss of skimming in winter on his skates across the frozen marshes, as if borne on spirit wings, or of sitting under the hornbeams in the mild, still spring air, lost in devotional feeling, and happy in perfect peace of conscience.

The return of the Bourbons was hailed with rejoicing by the Lamartine family, including Alphonse, now a young

man. The father (who had been wounded on the 10th of August 1792) conducted his son to Paris, and had him enrolled in the King's Guard. It fell one day to the young officer's lot to walk by the King's bath-chair, when he was being wheeled through the galleries of the Louvre to inspect the art treasures brought back by Napoleon from his various campaigns. The profound reverence of the youth's own mind made him imagine Louis's voice to be melodious, his person majestic and distinguished, his glance commanding, his speech brilliant, his silence eloquent. Several times after this the King addressed a few words to him when he was riding by the side of the royal carriage.

When Napoleon had landed at Cannes and was making his triumphal progress through France, Lamartine followed the Court to the Flemish frontier; there the Guard was disbanded and sent home, and after the Hundred Days Lamartine did not re-enter it, nor did he ever see the King again. But when, in 1820, Louis read the first volume of Lamartine's poems, he remembered their writer as a young officer of his Guard, and sent him, by way of reward, an edition of the poets of ancient Greece and Rome. Lamartine, apropos of this, makes the somewhat hasty remark, that King Louis evidently looked upon himself as an Augustus, who had discovered a Virgil.

The new poet openly proclaims himself to be a disciple of Chateaubriand and Bonald. In his *Raphael* (chap. I.) he tells how he came to make Bonald's acquaintance. When he was at Chambéry (in his twenty-fifth year) worshipping the beautiful young Creole celebrated in his poems under the name of Elvire, that lady asked him to write an ode to Bonald, who was a frequent and honoured visitor at her house. Lamartine informs us that all he then knew of Bonald was his name, and the halo shed around it by its owner's fame as a Christian legislator. "I imagined to myself," he says, "that I was addressing a modern Moses, who derived from the rays of a new Sinai the divine light with which he illuminated human laws." And so the ode which is to be found in the first collection of Lamar-

tine's poems under the title *Le Génie* was written. In it the young poet affirms—

> Ainsi des sophistes célèbres
> Dissipant les fausses clartés,
> Tu tires du sein des ténèbres
> D'éblouissantes vérités.
> Par le désordre à *l'ordre* même
> L'univers moral est conduit.

Here, as everywhere, we come upon that meagre conception of good—order. Bonald responded by sending Lamartine a complete edition of his works. The poet read them with enthusiasm. In notes appended to his ode at a later period he denies that they made any really profound impression on him ; but he is confusing his earlier with his later conviction. He writes : "I read these works with that poetical enthusiasm for the past and that emotional reverence inspired by ruins which youthful imagination so easily transforms into dogma and doctrine. For some months I tried to believe, on the authority of Chateaubriand and Bonald, in revealed governments ; but in my case, as in other people's, the tendency of the day and the development of human reason dispelled these beautiful illusions, and I comprehended that God reveals nothing to man but his social inclinations, and that the various systems of government are revelations of the age, of circumstances, of the vices and virtues of humanity." It is certain that Lamartine considerably antedates this conviction of his. All the *Méditations* are in the same tone as the ode to Bonald. The one entitled *Dieu* is dedicated to Lamennais, the dithyramb on the subject of sacred poetry to Genoude, the translator of the Bible. Lamartine himself wrote for *Le Conservateur*, a newspaper from the first appearance of which Chateaubriand dated the pronounced European reaction; and when this paper was given up, he, along with Lamennais and Bonald, started a new one on the same lines, *Le Défenseur*, the special aim of which was to oppose constitutional government. It fell to Lamartine's lot to solicit a contribution from Joseph de Maistre. It is significant that our poet, who by this time was aged thirty, should write to the

author of *Du Pape* in such a tone as this: "Monsieur le Comte! At the time I received your book and your kind and flattering letter, I was very ill. I employ my earliest returning strength to thank you for both, but specially for the honour you do me in calling me nephew, a title of which I boast to all who know you. It is a title which in itself is a reputation, in such estimation is your name held by all those who in this misled and contemptible age understand true and profound genius. M. de Bonald and you, Monsieur le Comte, and one or two others who at a distance follow in your steps, have founded an imperishable school of high philosophy and Christian politics, the influence of which is steadily increasing, especially among the younger generation."

In this same letter Lamartine defines Joseph de Maistre's position in literature to be that of leader of the best writers, and attributes the antagonism to him to "that absurd Gallican presumption" which De Maistre has discountenanced in a manner worthy of all admiration. Lamartine, thus, unmistakably favours the unlimited ecclesiastical authority of the Pope—but, note well, only in theory. In his poetry he is not nearly so dogmatic. When, for example—responding to Chateaubriand's appeal—he considers it his duty, as a Christian poet, to drive heathen mythology out of poetry, it is not really a pious, but an artistic instinct by which he is inspired. The old myths had, as far as lyric poetry was concerned, long ago dwindled into mere allegories or paraphrases, things far too vapid to have an injurious effect upon any one's religion. A crusade against faith in Apollo and Amor was a perfectly unnecessary undertaking.

Lamartine's influence was due to the fact that he uttered, now the sad, now the comforting, now the inspiring words which thousands craved to hear. They did not feel the want of new thoughts in his utterances; they were moved by the sound of his sympathetic voice. They felt once more vibrating within them fibres which, during the period of universal depression, had been completely benumbed; he conjured tones from strings which had

long given forth no sound ; and men delighted in the novelty which consisted in a revival of old memories. But, besides all this, there was one really new element. For Lamartine the ugly and the bad, nay, even the petty and the mean, did not exist. He clothed everything in a garment of shining light. There was a heavenly radiance over his poetry. For the first time for long years, a wealth of beautiful feeling found expression in melodious verse.

The great naturalist Cuvier, in his speech on the occasion of Lamartine's reception into the Academy in 1830, declared that men, in the profound obscurity which surrounds their reason, require a leader who can snatch them out of the black perplexity of doubt and draw them along with him into the region of light and certainty. He accused Byron of having seen nothing in the universe but a temple for the God of evil, and greeted Lamartine as the poet of hope. Thus did France, like some poor creature recovering from a dangerous illness, confuse hope with belief, comfort with dogma, vital energy with determined vindication of Papal authority—until at last the force of circumstances dispelled the mist, and forced men of letters as well as the general public to adopt definite standpoints.

Even later than this, Lamartine was still the man of the period. Only four months before the outbreak of the Revolution of July, a eulogium of Daru is prescribed as the theme of his oration before the French Academy. He accomplishes the feat of pronouncing it without naming Napoleon's name ; and he says frankly : "This century will be dated from our double restoration of lost blessings, the restoration of liberty by the throne and of the throne by liberty. . . . Let us not forget that our future is inseparably bound up with that of our kings, that it is impossible to separate the tree from its root without drying up the trunk, and that in our country it is monarchy which has borne everything, even the perfect fruit of liberty."

Lamartine now enjoys a period of triumph, the period of budding fame. Fame did not come to him early, for he was thirty years old ; but it penetrated like the first rays of

the rising sun into his ambitious soul. Let us picture to ourselves a salon in the days of Louis XVIII., as described by writers of the day. About a hundred persons are assembled in a suite of drawing-rooms in the house of some important personage, say General Foy. Lamartine, then an attaché of the embassy in Florence, but for the moment in Paris on one of his short visits, is among the invited guests.[1] A movement of admiration passes through the assembly as he enters—young, erect, handsome, aristocratic in mien and bearing. A crowd, chiefly of ladies, gathers round him; he is conscious of charming faces, splendid toilettes, smiles and flattery on every side. People forget for a moment to offer their congratulations to the deputies present on their last speeches. Even those who have not seen Lamartine before know him at once, for he outshines all. General Foy goes up to him, enthusiastically presses his hand, and assures him that it is in his power, whenever he chooses, to become an ornament of the Chamber, which has long stood in need of just such a talented champion of the sacred principles of royalty. Then Lamartine, in the melodious voice which as yet has never uttered a political catchword, repeats one or two of his first poems—*L'Enthousiasme*, *Souvenir*, *Le Désespoir*, *La Prière*, *La Foi*, or some such reflective pieces—thereby producing boundless ecstasy, and calling forth outbursts of every shade of enthusiasm and gratitude. Benjamin Constant comes up with his impenetrable, solemnly ironic mien, congratulates him on having discovered this new fountain of poetical inspiration, and assures him that he knows of no such loftiness and purity of thought and expression except in Schiller's reflective poems. The ladies are of opinion that this comparison is very flattering indeed to Schiller, an unknown German bourgeois poet, whose name they just remember having heard. What is he compared with Lamartine!

Various circumstances contributed to heighten the effect produced by the poems themselves—in the first place, the uncommon and almost feminine personal beauty of their author; in the second, the rumours in circulation regard-

[1] Villemain, *M. de Fétets et les salons de son temps.*

ing the lady whose praises were sung with such seraphic enthusiasm, such supernatural purity. It was reported that the poet had loved, and that death had deprived him of the object of his affections. Much trouble was taken to discover the actual circumstances of the case. Who was this Elvire? What was her real name?

We of to-day have been sufficiently enlightened by Lamartine's own later prose works, but with the satisfaction of curiosity on this subject interest in Lamartine's lyric poetry is not extinguished.

It was natural that the contemporaries of the youthful Lamartine should see in him first and foremost the poet of the throne and the altar. His earliest published poem was a heart-felt expression of gratitude to the Jesuit school which had sheltered him in his boyhood. Such a poem as his *Ode* was simply the essence of Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme* versified. His lines on the birth of the Duke of Bordeaux (Comte de Chambord), after the death of his father, the Duc de Berry, with their refrain: "He is born, the miraculous child!" expressed the feelings of the most loyal Catholics. And on every occasion, in almost all of the poems, he lauds and magnifies, justifies and adores God, Providence. At times, as for instance in the poem *La Semaine Sainte*, written during a visit to the young Duc de Rohan, who later in life became an archbishop and a cardinal, his verse is almost like a fervently devotional burning of incense. If he is to be taken at his word when he asserts, in writing of this poem many years afterwards, that he alone, among the young men who gathered round the Duke, had no relish whatever for the church's mystic joys, all we can conclude is that his poetic talent was carried away by the current of the tendency of the day.

Most of the purely religious poetry of Lamartine's youthful period is, from its want of simplicity and real feeling, almost unreadable nowadays. It is not lyric; it is not concise; it is reflection without matter, meditation without thoughts, breadth without depth. A good example is the poem dedicated to Byron, entitled *L'Homme*. The French poet's conception of his English contemporary is the

traditional, stereotyped, inexpressibly silly one of the day, namely, that he touches only the chords of despair, that his eye, like Satan's, fathoms abysses, &c. To show Byron how the true poet ought to sing, Lamartine strikes up the most servile hymn of praise to a God who, he himself tells us, plagues, tortures, plunders, overwhelms with misfortune and misery, and concludes with the exhortation:

> Jette un cri vers le ciel, ô chantre des enfers !

The notes appended at a later period to this poem betray an astonishing ignorance of Lord Byron's history; almost everything affirmed of him is incorrect. Though Lamartine wrote a poem to Childe-Harold, he never so much as learned to spell the name correctly.

The same admonitory tone which he here assumes towards Byron he adopted many years later in writing of Alfred de Musset, to whom he also offered pious and moral truisms as medicaments.

The piety which Lamartine felt in duty bound to display is less offensive, because more sincere, in the ode entitled *L'Immortalité*. This poem is addressed to the beloved of his youth, Elvire, whose scepticism was a great grief to him, and its aim is to comfort her on her death-bed with the prospect of an immortality in which until now she has refused to believe. But even here we have such frigid allegorical ideas as: "And Hope, standing by thy side, O Death! dreaming upon a grave, opens to me a fairer world."

In only one of the poems which invoke the Deity is Lamartine really the lyric poet and not merely the fluent verse-writer, namely in *Le Désespoir*, a Meditation which expresses revolt against our idea of God. In this poem we have rhythmic flow, passion, and two qualities rarely found in Lamartine's productions—vigour and conciseness. What has God seen since the creation of the world?

> La vertu succombant sous l'audace impunie,
> L'imposture en honneur, la vérité bannie;
> L'errante liberté
> Aux dieux vivants du monde offerte en sacrifice;
> Et la force, par-tout, fondant de l'injustice
> Le règne illimité.

And in its original form the poem contained verses, suppressed at the time of publication, which expressed sentiments far more bitter and impious than these. It is characteristic that almost immediately after the appearance of *Le Désespoir*, Lamartine, at his mother's request, refuted the ideas it expressed in a reply-poem, *Dieu à l'Homme*, which, though not wanting in melodious sonority, is, as even its author perceived, not to be compared with the first. The first, he himself correctly observes, is the product of inspiration, the second of reflection.

But all the theological trappings were, as one might say, only glued on to Lamartine's poetry. Or one might perhaps with more propriety liken them to a carelessly constructed raft, which for a time floats upon the bosom of the stream and then breaks up into its component parts and disappears. All this pious dogmatism soon resolved itself into love of nature, worship of nature, a sincerely religious philosophy of nature.

What really lived and breathed in those early poems was something independent of their religious dogmatism, namely, the whole emotional life of a gentle, yet dignified soul. The soul which found expression in them had this characteristic of the new century, that it loved solitude, and only in solitude found itself and felt itself rich. It was an unsociable soul, only disposed to vibrate in harmony with nature. It was sad and pathetically earnest; under no circumstances whatever cheerful or gay. And, finally, it was never erotic; one only of the poems was an expression of the happiness of satisfied love; the feeling pervading all the rest was sorrow over the loss of the loved one, whom death had claimed as his prey. The poetry of the eighteenth century had resolved love into gallantry, had taken neither it nor woman seriously, but in this new poetry love was the silent worship of a memory, and woman was adored and glorified as she had been in the days of the Minnesingers; only now it was woman as the departed one, as the spirit.

Never did Lamartine depict the wild grief of loss at the moment of the loss; in his poems grief has become a

condition, a silent despair which blunts, stiffens, tortures, and at a rare time dissolves into tears.

This new song was song which flowed naturally from its fountain, plentiful and pure; it was music like harp-strains blended with the tones of celestial violins. And, borne on these tones, simple, familiar emotions communicated themselves to the reader's mind, such thoughts as that of the poem *La Retraite*—happiness awaits me nowhere; or of *L'Automne*—nature's autumnal mourning garb harmonises with my sorrow and is pleasant to my eyes; or of *Le Golfe de Baya*—this spot, once the scene of such great events, preserves not a trace of them; in like manner we ourselves shall disappear, leaving no trace behind. But, note well; a thought like this last was expressed in such wonderfully beautiful lines as the following:

Ainsi tout change, ainsi tout passe;
Ainsi nous-mêmes nous passons,
Hélas! sans laisser plus de trace
Que cette barque où nous glissons
Sur cette mer où tout s'efface.

There was never any systematic description of nature, or any attempt at painting; the momentary impression of nature was caught, even as it passed, by genius, and preserved for all time.

The poet is sitting at evening on the bare mountain side. Venus rises above the horizon (*Le Soir*). A ray from the star seems to glide across his brow and touch his eyes, and he feels as if the departed one, in whose companionship he had lived here, were hovering near him. He addresses the ray from Venus:

Mon cœur à ta clarté s'enflamme,
Je sens des transports inconnus,
Je songe à ceux qui ne sont plus:
Douce lumière, es-tu leur âme?

Or, sitting on a rock by the lake (*Le Bourget*), where in bygone happy days he had sat by her side, he is painfully affected by the feeling of the mutability of everything human as compared with the unchangeableness of inanimate nature.

This is the emotion to which he gives expression in his poem *Le Lac*, which, in spite of its extraordinary popularity, is probably the best he ever wrote. It is an excellent type of his poetry; flowing gently, with no exertion perceptible, not even that exertion which we call art, it is as naturally melodious as the rippling of the lake. The emotion which the poet desires to express is indicated with admirable precision in the metaphor with which the first verse concludes: Is it impossible to cast anchor on the ocean of time even for a single day? The lake is described with its waves breaking upon the rocks as they did a year ago, when the beloved one heard their murmur; and the bereaved lover recalls the words which she spoke in the stillness of night, as their boat floated on the waters—an invocation to time, that happy time, to stay its flight, a prayer to it to hasten for the unhappy and suffering, but to linger with those who love and are beloved. He repeats her concluding cry: Prayer is fruitless; let us love one another and enjoy the passing hour! For man there is no haven, time has no shore; it flows on and we disappear. On this memory of the thoughts of his dead love follows the poet's own invocation to nature. He invokes the lake, the silent rocks, the caves, the dark woods, the things which time spares and those which it re-animates, and beseeches them to preserve the remembrance of that night.

And Lamartine, so spiritual in his expression of the grief and loneliness of the bereaved lover, is almost as spiritual when for once he gives expression to happy love. This he does in *Chant d'amour*, a poem which he himself naïvely describes as a modern Song of Solomon, quieter in tone and less Oriental in colouring than the old, but which in reality has as little resemblance to that song as the chastest spirituality of the West has to the glowing sensuality of the East. Here, as elsewhere, the chord which he touches is the chord of plaintive tenderness, gradually modulating into that of religious devotion.

Of Lamartine's youthful verse these purely human poems are all that we really care for nowadays. We are terribly bored by the vapid compositions which, following the pre-

scribed rule for religious poetry, consist of nothing but adoration of the Deity as he reveals himself in his works.

The poet whose acquaintance we make in the human poems is unmistakably very vain, much engrossed with himself and his own lovableness, and at times too honeyed in his language. But his vanity is so childlike and innocent that it does not affect us unpleasantly ; and we are favourably impressed by the fact that it is not literary vanity. Lamartine rejoices that he is good-looking, a favourite with distinguished women, a good horseman, in course of time an eloquent orator ; but he is not conceited about his poetical gifts, not even proud of them. The man whose talent was that of the true improvisatore with proud humility describes himself in his prefaces and memoirs as one who cultivates art for his pleasure, and who does not belong to the number of the specially initiated. And he really is the dilettante in so far as he is too careless to be called a true artist. He has unconscious technique, he has flexibility and ease, but along with these an inclination to long-windedness and repetition which at times spoils his effects, and a want of the power of self-criticism which makes it difficult, nay, almost impossible, for him to correct and improve. Nevertheless, all his life long he was a poet, a true poet—in spite of his artistic defects one of the most genuine whom France has produced. It was not his fault that he made his appearance in literature under the unpropitious planet of the reaction period.

It was under the influence of the same planet that the man destined to become the most famous French poet of the nineteenth century won a name for himself. Victor Hugo, born in 1802, is for a long period of his life as good a Catholic and royalist as Lamartine, his senior by twelve years. Hugo's literary career corresponds closely with the political career of the French nation. He is an adherent of the Bourbons as long as they are the reigning family. When the Revolution of July takes place, he sympathises with it, and he is an adherent of the new monarchy from the moment it is founded. During the reign of King Louis Philippe, at whose court he is a frequent guest, he becomes an enthusi-

astic eulogist of Napoleon when the cult of Napoleon is revived in France. He warmly supports the candidature of Louis Napoleon for the post of President of the Republic, continues to lend him his support when he occupies that post, and is even favourable to the idea of an empire, until the feeling that he is despised as a politician estranges him from the Prince-President, and resentment at the *coup d'état* drives him into the camp of the extreme Republicans. His life may be said to mirror the political movements of France during the first half of the century. He was, as is so often the case with poets, not a leading spirit, but an organ.

In the last preface to his *Odes et Ballades* Hugo, in his pompous manner, writes of his own career: "History goes into ecstasies over Michel Ney, who, born a cooper, became a marshal of France, and over Murat, who, born an ostler, became a king. The obscurity of their origin is considered to give them an additional claim to respect, and to add to the glory of the position to which they have attained. Of all the ladders which lead from darkness to light, the one which it is most difficult and most meritorious to mount by is undoubtedly that which leads from the position of loyal aristocrat to that of democrat. To rise from a hut to a palace is, no doubt, an uncommon and admirable achievement, but to rise from error to truth is more uncommon and more admirable. In the case of the first ascent, the man gains something, increases his comfort, his power, his wealth, with every upward step; in the case of the second, exactly the opposite happens . . . he must pay for his spiritual growth with one sacrifice of temporal well-being after another . . . and if it is true that Murat could with pride lay his postillion's whip beside his sceptre, saying: 'This is what I began with,' then certainly the poet may with more justifiable pride and greater inward satisfaction point to the royalist odes which he wrote as a child and youth, and lay them beside the democratic poems and works which he has written as a grown man. And the pride is perhaps especially justifiable in one who at the end of his ascent, on the topmost step of the ladder of

light, has found banishment, in the man who can date this preface from exile."

Victor Hugo was the son of one of Napoleon's officers who had originally been a violent revolutionist, and as such had exchanged his Christian name, Joseph, for that of Brutus, which, however, he dropped again when the Revolution was at an end. Joseph Hugo was at Besançon, in command of a battalion, when his famous son was born. A few weeks later he was sent to Corsica. From Corsica he was transferred to Elba, thence to Genoa and the Italian army. He entered the service of Napoleon's brother Joseph when Joseph became King of Naples, and at Naples his wife and children joined him in October 1807. When in 1808 Joseph was made King of Spain, Colonel Hugo followed him to that country, sending his wife and three little sons to Paris, where they lived from 1808 till 1811. In the spring of 1811 they accompanied a strong detachment of troops to Madrid, but Hugo thought it prudent to send them back to Paris in the following year, while he himself, who had been promoted with extraordinary rapidity to be aide-de-camp to the King, major-domo of the palace, general, Count of Cisuentes, inspector-general of the Peninsular army, and governor of three provinces, took part in the war until the defeat of Vittoria, in June 1813, obliged Joseph to abdicate. Napoleon, who could not bear General Hugo, and always treated him badly, refused to confirm his appointment as general and his title as count (his other preferments he had lost), and ordered him to enter the French army again with the rank of major. In 1814 and 1815 Joseph Hugo distinguished himself by his able defence of the fortress of Thionville. His son writes of him as if he had been an ardent votary of Napoleon. This he most certainly was not, and when the Bourbons returned they at once gained his complete allegiance by restoring him to his rank of general, with promotion dating from 1809, the year in which he had received it from King Joseph. Thus it was not only Victor Hugo's mother, the daughter of a loyal shipowner of the Breton town of Nantes, who was a devoted royalist; his father, too, was strongly attached to the restored royal house.

Causes entirely unconnected with politics produced a misunderstanding between the parents, and they separated. The sons, Abel, Eugène, and Victor, remained with their mother in Paris.

All three possessed literary ability, though only the youngest lived long enough to display his full power and win fame. All three were, to begin with, champions of royalty and the church. Victor said as a boy: "I will be Chateaubriand, or no one."

After winning prizes for their poems in Paris and at Toulouse, the three brothers, with the view of earning a living, started a literary periodical (in 1819). Chateaubriand was at this time editing the extreme Conservative newspaper *Le Conservateur*. The brothers named their venture *Le Conservateur littéraire*, and Chateaubriand gave it a warm welcome. The new periodical came out twice a month until March 1821, and Victor Hugo alone supplied more poems and articles than all the other contributors together. In *Le Conservateur littéraire* are already to be found some of his most famous odes—*Les Vierges de Verdun*, the odes on the fate of La Vendée, on the death of the Duke of Berri, on the birth of the Duke of Bordeaux, and the beautiful, more personal song of rejoicing on the occasion of the restoration of the statue of Henry IV. And in it we also find, to the number of over a hundred, his first essays in criticism, of which only a few, and these much tampered with, have been included in the collection entitled *Littérature et Philosophie mêlées*.

At this period poetry is to Victor Hugo the daughter of religion. Apropos of an ode on the existence of God, he writes: "The desire to thank a bountiful God in language worthy of Him begat poetry. From its birth it shared in the triumphs of religion, which united the earliest societies and began the civilisation of the world. At the present day, when, in order to demolish society, men attack religion, the only bridle upon man, the only lasting tie which holds societies together, it is not surprising that they should seek to make an ally of poetry. But the divine muse does not allow herself to be inspired by that which is nought."

And at this period, too, he proclaims the superiority of

Corneille and Racine to Shakespeare and Schiller: "We have never understood the difference alleged to exist between classic and romantic art. Shakespeare's and Schiller's dramas differ from Corneille's and Racine's only in being more faulty."

The first edition of Victor Hugo's *Odes* appeared in 1822. Louis XVIII., who read them over and over again, settled an annuity of 1000 francs a year on the poet out of his private purse; in the following year the Ministry of the Interior conferred on him a pension of 2000 francs; and in 1826 the King, on being applied to, increased the amount of his yearly grant.

The King had good reason to show approval, for these first poems of Victor Hugo contain the whole system of orthodox political and religious principles valid under the Bourbon monarchy. They are a faithful image of the period during which they were written.

They pass in review the history of France from 1789 to 1825. In those of them which treat of the Revolution we observe, as in the corresponding poems by Lamartine, that two words occur more frequently than any others—executioners and victims. In the history of the Revolution Hugo sees nothing else. For its leading spirits he has but this one designation—executioners; the Convention he describes as a creation of the devil (livre i. ode 4); and, little as he loves heathen mythology, he cannot resist using the expression, *Hydra* of anarchy, when he wishes to depict the horrors of the revolutionary period. For the enemies of the Revolution victims is the stereotyped designation; the revolt of La Vendée is eulogised in every second poem, and odes are addressed to its heroes and heroines (*La Vendée*, *Quiberon*, *Mlle. Sombreuil*). The guillotine is always present to the poet's imagination, and is the constant object of his anathemas, except when, as in the ode *Le Dévouement* (livre iv. ode 4), he is carried away to the extent of desiring martyrdom for himself, "because the martyrs' angel is the most beautiful of all the angels who bear the souls of men to heaven."

Following in the footprints of Chateaubriand, Victor

Hugo goes back to the Christian martyrs of ancient Rome, and in no fewer than four odes (*Le repas libre, L'homme heureux, Le chant du cirque, Un chant de fête de Néron*) describes the agonising triumph of the martyrs over the brutal and voluptuous cruelty to which they in outward appearance succumb. And the symbolism, too, is the same as in Chateaubriand's poetry; it is the death of the orthodox noble or priest which is represented under the form of the butcheries of the circus.

One of the finest of these poems of the Revolution is the oldest, written in memory of a little company of innocent young girls who, under the Reign of Terror, were executed after a long imprisonment without being brought to trial, on the vague and incorrect suspicion that they had testified pleasure when the Prussians entered their town (*Les vierges de Verdun*). Hugo paints the tribunal of the Convention blacker than is necessary, by crediting the public prosecutor, Fouquier-Tinville, with impure designs upon his victims and putting insulting proposals into his mouth; but even without the addition of unhistorical incidents, the sentence of these girls was so shameful, their fate so tragic, and their behaviour so beautiful and dignified, that they well deserved a poetic monument, even a better one than Hugo raised to them.[1]

The poet's pathos is entirely justifiable in cases like this, where the Revolution showed its dark and unjust side in its dealings with youth and innocence, but it becomes grating and false as soon as his dogmas come into play. His tone in writing of the monarchy and the glories of royalty is positively insufferable. In the Ode to Louis XVIII. God calls upon the seraphs, the prophets, and the archangels to do obeisance to the newly arrived heir to the throne: "Courbez-vous, c'est un Roi." And not content with this, the Deity Himself calls him by his title, not his name: "O Roi!" and reminds him that *God's own Son was, like him, a king with a crown of thorns.* In the poem on the occasion of the baptism of the Comte de Chambord, the language is even stronger: "God has given us one of His

[1] Any one interested in their real story will find it told according to the original historical documents in Cuvillier-Fleury's *Portraits Politiques*, 1851, pp. 377, &c.

angels, *as He gave us His Son in the days of old.*" We are reminded that the water of the river Jordan (brought home by Chateaubriand) in which the child has been baptized is the same in which Jesus was baptized; it is the will of Heaven, we are told, "that the reassured world should, even by the very water used for his baptism, recognise a *Saviour.*" In *La Vision* the eighteenth century is summoned before the judgment-seat of God, and there accused of having in the pride of its knowledge mocked at the dogmas which are the support of the law and of morality. It timidly expresses the hope that the future will view its actions in a more favourable light, but it is mercilessly condemned; the "guilty century" is plunged into the abyss, pursued as it falls by the inexorable voice of the judge.

The standpoint from which Napoleon (who is always called Buonaparte) is viewed harmonises with that from which the Revolution is judged; he is the usurper, the savage soldier, the murderer of Enghien; and again and again it is impressed on us that lilies are better than laurels. Under the name of Colonel G. A. Gustaffson (livre iii. ode 5), Gustavus IV., who lived as an exile in France during the reign of Louis XVIII., is eulogised as the representative of the fallen kings. The personality and story of Gustavus are represented in a manner which witnesses to Hugo's remarkable ignorance of foreign history—the king's whole life is a model life; his great mind is like a temple, whence proceeds the voice of God; he dictates the history of the future; he is the successor of the ancient seers; actuated by disgust at seeing the monarchs bow their necks to Napoleon's yoke, he has voluntarily taken off his crown, and thereby raised his head high above all the other royal heads on earth. Could folly go farther than this? The wretched, insane Gustavus a model king! The Bourbons are of course exalted to the skies. All their family events—birth, baptism, death, ascension, consecration—are treated as of world-wide import. In a poem on the subject of the reprehensible war which France, at Chateaubriand's instigation, carried on with Spain in the interests of the European reaction, royalty, the royal power, is declared to be miraculous; and in the same poem

the king is expressly described as the war-lord, supporting himself by the power of the sword ; war is, we are told, the companion of royalty :

Il faut, comme un soldat, qu'un prince ait une épée ;
Il faut, des factions quand l'astre impur a lui,
Que, nuit et jour, bravant leur attente trompée
Un glaive veille auprès de lui ;
Ou que de son armée il se fasse un cortège ;
Que son fier palais se protège
D'un camp au front étincelant ;
Car de la Royauté la Guerre est la compagne :
On ne peut briser le sceptre de Charlemagne,
Sans briser le fer de Roland.

It is not surprising that all these odes should have mottoes taken either from the Bible or from religious works, notably Chateaubriand's *Les Martyrs*, a book by which men's minds were so powerfully impressed that the younger poets of the day took a pride in transposing whole pages of it into verse.[1] Lamartine addressed his ode *Le Génie* to Bonald ; Hugo dedicates an ode with the same name to Chateaubriand, of whom he writes that "he suffers the double martyrdom of genius and virtue."

He addresses several poems to Lamartine—it is his desire, he writes, to go into battle on the same war-chariot as his friend, to manage the horses while Lamartine wields the spear—and these poems are among the most attractive of all, partly because they are remarkably beautiful, and testify to the respectful and yet at the same time brotherly feeling of the younger for the elder poet, partly because in them we have, along with Hugo's views on religious and social questions, the expression of his ideas on the subject of art. All the poems prove with what earnestness, but also with what exaggerated and almost offensive self-consciousness, the young poet has apprehended his mission—it is always called a prophet's mission ; the poet is a seer, a shepherd of the people ; of Lamartine, Hugo goes the length of declaring that one feels as if God had revealed Himself to him face to face. But it is in the poems to Lamartine that we

[1] For example, Émile Deschamps, *Poésies*, edition of 1841, p. 124. "Une page des martyrs."

perceive most clearly what is Hugo's conception of the position and relation of the new literature to that of the eighteenth century. It bears a remarkable resemblance to a kindred literary phenomenon in Denmark, namely, Oehlenschläger and his friends' conception of their position to Baggesen. Read, for example, the poem *La Lyre et la Harpe* (livre iv. ode 2). The lyre represents the frivolous, licentious poetry of the preceding century, which chants the praises of Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, and Eros, and inculcates an intellectual epicureanism, whereas in the tones of the harp we hear the admonition to watch and pray, to remember the seriousness of life, to think of death, to support and help our stumbling brethren. The poem is dedicated to "Alph. de L."; the word harp in itself pointed to Lamartine.

This offensive attitude towards the past is the first symptom of the approaching breach with that past's whole system of ideas, from which Hugo's significance as an author and leader of a literary movement dates.[1]

[1] Lamartine, *Mémoires; Voyage en Orient; Méditations poétiques; Nouvelles méditations poétiques; Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, i., ii.; Victor Hugo, *Odes et Ballades;* Edmond Biré, *Victor Hugo avant* 1830.

X

LOVE IN THE LITERATURE OF THE PERIOD

Of great significance as regards the whole character of the period is the answer to the question: What is the nature of the amatory sentiment in the writings of the authors of this group?

Of all the emotions treated of in literature the emotion of love is that which receives most attention, and as a rule makes most impression on the reader. Knowledge of the manner in which it is apprehended and represented is an important factor in any real understanding of the spirit of an age. In the age's conception of the passion of love we have, as it were, a gauge by which we can measure with extreme accuracy the force, the nature, the temperature of its whole emotional life. We see gallantry transformed into passion in the works of Rousseau. In the writings of Germany's great poets this passion is chastened and humanised. The German Romanticists turn love into a sort of moonlight sentimentality. In revolutionary times it is represented as at war with existing and regular social relations. In the works of the sceptical authors of the nineteenth century, such as Heine, it is undermined by doubt of its existence.[1]

In such a period as that at present under consideration, a period which rejects the claims of the body, pins its faith to authority, and prizes order above all things, love necessarily receives a characteristic imprint. If we glance at the most notable descriptions of love which the period has bequeathed to us, we gain some idea of its main types of humanity, male and female.

[1] Doch wenn du sprichst: Ich liebe dich,
So muss ich weinen bitterlich.

The first pair to meet our eyes are Eudore and Velléda in *Les Martyrs*.

The hero of *Les Martyrs* is peculiarly interesting to us because Chateaubriand has painted him with many of the features of his own expressive countenance. So great is the similarity of their circumstances that the words and the reflections with which Chateaubriand and Eudore begin to tell the stories of their lives are almost identical. Eudore says: "Born at the foot of Mount Taygetus, the melancholy murmur of the sea was the first sound that fell upon my ear. On how many shores have I since then watched those waves break that I am now gazing on! Who could have told me a few short years ago that I should hear the waves moaning on the beaches of Italy, on the shores of the Batavians, the Britons, and the Gauls, which I then saw laving the bright sands of Messenia?" And Chateaubriand, in his *Voyage en Italie*, writes: "Born on the rocky shores of Brittany, the first sound which fell on my ear when I came into the world was the roar of the sea; and on how many shores have I since then seen the billows break on which I am now gazing! Who could have told me a few short years ago that I should hear moaning by the graves of Scipio and Virgil the waves that rolled at my feet on English beaches and the shores of Maryland?" &c.

Both these heroes are, thus, far-travelled and sorely tried men of the type of Odysseus and Æneas. Common to both are astonishment at the many and strange adventures of their own lives, and admiration of themselves, who have been protected throughout all these dangers by higher powers. But more significant is another feature which they have in common. Eudore, like Chateaubriand, is the hero who brings about the triumph of Christianity upon earth. Chateaubriand does in the reign of Napoleon what Eudore did in the reign of Galerius; and it is not his fault that he is not a martyr; the thought of martyrdom was one which often occupied him in his youth; he repeatedly said to friends that he would not have drawn back if his life had been required of him. The heroic figure always present to his imagination as a pattern is

nothing less than the sacrificial victim who atones for the ungodliness and apostasy of the age, and who by his life-work and his sufferings appeases an angry God. In the first edition of *Les Martyrs* Eudore is plainly called a lesser Christ. In writing of him the author uses the expression that the Almighty demanded "une hostie entière." In the later editions this particular expression was, on religious grounds, omitted, but in another place the same idea has been inadvertently retained, with an almost comic effect. In the account of Eudore's martyrdom we read: "The chair of fire was now ready. Seated on its glowing bars, the Christian teacher preached the Gospel more eloquently than before. Seraphims shed the dew of heaven on him, and his guardian angel sheltered him with his wings. *Il paraissait dans la flamme comme un pain délicieux préparé pour les tables célestes.*"

We have here the fundamental idea that distinguishes the type. The first sacrifice, the first saviour, the first "host," is not enough. Although he is a Christian, Chateaubriand does not believe that the sacrificial death of Christ has been a complete atonement, has done all that was required. To ensure the triumph of religion minor saviours, such as Chateaubriand himself and his hero Eudore, are still needed. In German Romanticism even a miserable creature like Golo in Tieck's *Genoveva* is understood to have a resemblance to Christ; the same is the case with Eudore.[1] Though he errs in his youth and for a short time treads the path of destruction in beautiful Naples (Chateaubriand knew by experience that the best resolutions are no security against such backsliding), he reforms, stands steadfast in every trial, and dies a shining light.

His love for Velléda is one of these trials.

Velléda is undoubtedly the most remarkable and most influential female character in the French literature of this period. She is a Gallic maiden of the third century, and in her Chateaubriand depicts the French national type. "This was no ordinary woman. She had that attractive

[1] F. L. Liebenberg, *Bidrag til den Oehlenschlägerske Litteraturs Historie*, i. 183. Genoveva "sees Christ in him."

waywardness which distinguishes the women of Gaul. Her glance was quick and keen, the expression of her mouth slightly satirical, her smile peculiarly gentle and expressive. Her bearing was now proud, now voluptuous. Her whole personality was a mixture of gentleness and dignity, of artlessness and art." But Velléda is not simply French ; she bears the distinct impress of the age of her creation ; she is an ideal of 1808. She is a priestess, and belongs to the family of the Arch-Druid. In the first decade of the nineteenth century the feminine character was not perfect unless it was marked by religious enthusiasm. It was also obligatory that Velléda should not be purely and simply the child of nature ; she is so only to the same extent as were the ladies of 1808. We are expressly and somewhat pedantically told of her that in the family of the Arch-Druid she had been "carefully instructed in the literature of Greece and in the history of her own country." Velléda is the last priestess of the Druids, as Cymodocée is the last priestess of Homer. A short time ago Corinne had been the model of the ambitious young Frenchwoman, now she was supplanted by Velléda ; and, literature not being merely a medium of expression for society, but also an important agent in remoulding it, we see the type pass from the world of imagination into the world of reality. What is Madame de Krüdener, standing in front of the Russian army, but a Christian Velléda ?

When we make the acquaintance of the young priestess she is seated in a boat which is tossing on the waves of a tempestuous sea, trying to still the storm with her incantations ; for she, like Fouqué's Undine, has, or believes she has, a certain power over the sea. Later we hear her, in an eloquent speech, calling on her countrymen to take up arms against the Romans and reconquer their liberty. We see her, as the priestess of Teutates, sharpening her sickle to offer a human sacrifice. How beautiful she is as her creator describes her to us—tall and straight, scantily clothed in a short, black, sleeveless tunic, her golden sickle hanging from a girdle of steel! Her eyes are blue, her lips rose-red ; her fair flowing hair is bound with a slender oak-branch or a wreath of verbena.

Hardly has she seen Eudore than she loves him. But such simple and natural passion is not enough for the age; it demands that Velléda shall be a devotee of Vesta, shall have taken the oath of eternal virginity. "I am a virgin, the virgin of the island of the Seine; whether I keep my oath or break it I die—die for your sake." Eudore admires her, but does not love her. His relation to her is that of the pious Æneas to Dido, a fact to which the author makes him draw our attention. The unfortunate Velléda tries all her magic arts. At one time she determines to steal her way in to Eudore on the moonbeams; at another she is preparing to fly into the tower which he inhabits and win his love in the shape of another woman, but the very thought arouses her jealousy and causes her to desist. Eudore, though he does not return her passion, feels himself, as it were, infected by its atmosphere when he is beside her. As a Christian he shrinks with horror from the temptation. "At least twenty times while Velléda was telling me of her sad and tender feelings, I was on the point of throwing myself at her feet, announcing her victory, and making her happy by the acknowledgment of my defeat. At the moment when I was about to succumb, the compassion with which the unhappy woman inspired me saved me. But this very compassion, which saved me at first, in the end proved my destruction; for it deprived me of the last remnant of my strength." Looking at the matter from the purely artistic point of view, it offends our taste to hear a man dilate thus upon his struggles to preserve his virtue; Eudore's outbursts of shame and remorse do not become him well. "O Cyrille," he says, "how can I go on with such a story! I blush with shame and confusion." When at last, after Velléda has attempted to kill herself, this knight of the doleful countenance has yielded and is lying at her feet, nothing less will serve him than to set all the powers of hell loose on the occasion. "I fell at Velléda's feet. . . . Hell gave the signal for these terrible nuptials; the spirits of darkness howled from their abyss, the chaste spouses of our forefathers turned away their faces, my guardian angel hid his with his wings and returned to heaven,"

Even at the supreme moment this depressing hero is incapable of self-surrender; he is ashamed; he resembles a boy who, with a feeling compounded of gluttony and fear of flogging, devours a stolen apple. "My happiness resembled despair, and any one seeing us in the midst of our rapture would have taken us for two criminals who had just received their sentence of death. From that moment I felt that I was stamped with the seal of divine wrath. Thick darkness spread like a smoke-cloud in my soul; I felt as if a host of rebellious spirits had suddenly taken possession of it. Thoughts filled my mind which until this moment had never occurred to me; the language of hell poured from my lips; I uttered such blasphemies as are heard in the place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth."

It is, thus, on a background of hell-fire that Chateaubriand depicts the love of the Christian confessor and the heathen prophetess. In *Atala*, where we have a kindred representation of combined suffering and pleasure, the insincere anathema against earthly love was not yet launched.

We come upon much the same idea in one of Alfred de Vigny's youthful works, *Eloa*, a beautiful and notable poem which describes the seduction of a charming young angel of the female sex by the Prince of Darkness. The Satan of *Les Martyrs* was a revolutionist, but De Vigny's Satan is hardly to be distinguished from the Eros of the ancients. Without telling who he is, he ensnares the fair angel with his personal charms and his eloquence, and draws her with him into the abyss. He himself describes his power in the following words:

> Je suis celui qu'on aime et qu'on ne connaît pas.
> Sur l'homme j'ai fondé mon empire de flamme
> Dans les désirs du cœur, dans les rêves de l'âme,
> Dans les liens des corps, attraits mystérieux,
> Dans les trésors du sang, dans les regards des yeux.
> C'est moi qui fait parler l'épouse dans ses songes;
> La jeune fille heureuse apprend d'heureux mensonges;
> Je leur donne des nuits qui consolent des jours,
> Je suis le Roi secret des secrètes amours.

We are irresistibly reminded of the song to Eros in the *Antigone* of Sophocles.

As the period is now rapidly descending the incline leading to the conception of Eros as the devil himself, it is only natural that in the descriptions of "real" love on which it prides itself it should be more frigid and impotent, more seraphic and platonic than any other age we are acquainted with. Let us see how the Velléda of the day, Madame de Krüdener herself, describes love in *Valérie*.

Although *Valérie* is an imitation of *Werther*, it is in many ways extremely unlike *Werther*. It is the story of a young Swede, Gustave Linar by name, who in his childhood learned from his mother "to love virtue," and who continues to love it until he dies. Along with virtue he loves Valérie, but Valérie is the wife of the Count, his master and ideal, and is herself such a quintessence of all the virtues that he regards her with a reverence which makes desire impossible. Alexander Stakjev confessed his feelings to Krüdener, but Gustave utters not a word to the Count, nor does he ever speak of his sufferings to the woman he loves.[1] Preyed upon by uncomprehended and unavowed love, and far too well-behaved to shoot himself, he dies of consumption.

This is his style: "O my friend, how criminal of me to have yielded to a passion which I was well aware would be my destruction! But I will at least die in the love of virtue and sacred truth; I will not charge Heaven with my misfortunes, as so many men in my plight do (what virtue!); I will endure without complaint the suffering which I have brought upon myself, and which I love, although it is killing me. I will go when the Almighty calls me, burdened with many sins, but not with that of suicide." (ii. 63.)

Gustave is not a man. It is generally acknowledged that the portraiture of men is not the strong point of female authors. They almost invariably depict them as entirely absorbed in their relations with women. Gustave is, as already observed, a Scandinavian; but Scandinavians have

[1] In two successive editions of his *Französische Litteraturgeshichte*, Julian Schmidt, in giving an account of *Valérie*, has made the mistake of asserting that Gustave confesses to the husband.

no reason to be proud of this compatriot, in whom the vigour of the Northerner is conspicuously absent. The national colouring of the story is confined almost entirely to the Teutonic sentimentality in which the descriptions are immersed, and to a variety of Swedish names, which, it goes without saying, are as a rule incorrectly spelt. At Venice Gustave gives a fête in Valérie's honour; the decorations are intended to remind her of the home of her youth, amongst the birches and pines; when she catches sight of them she cries: "Ah! c'est Dronnigor" (Drottninggård).

There is nothing characteristically Swedish about Gustave. Really beautiful in the description of his character is the gleam of youthful philanthropic enthusiasm shed over his confessions. It seems to him that in most men's lives the period of love is succeeded by that of ambition. There is something fine and sincere in the language in which he tells that the glory others desire is not that which in his eyes has seemed desirable. "The glory of which I dreamed was won by occupying one's self with the happiness of all, as love occupies itself with the happiness of a single individual. It was virtue in the man who possessed it, before his fellow-men gave it the name of fame." And he adds: "What has real glory in common with the petty vanity of the many, with the pitiful contention that one is something because one is striving hard to be it?" It is strange to find sentiments like these in a book the fame of which was due to such artifices as were employed to puff *Valérie*.

The heroine is equipped with all the charms which a lady as passionately in love with herself as Madame de Krüdener was could communicate to her own portrait. She is a thorough woman, whilst the unfortunate Gustave, though quite aware of the foolishness and hopelessness of his passion, is absolutely unable to burst his bonds and begin to live the life of a man. He is obliged to content himself with such humble expressions of his adoration as kissing a child whom his mistress has kissed on the spot which her lips have touched, or kissing the outside of the window-pane on the inside of which she is resting her bare arm during the pause between two dances at a ball, or

pressing her hand and feeling the ring given her by her husband, or fainting in her presence, so that she is obliged to bathe his brow with eau-de-Cologne.

A faint perfume of eau-de-Cologne may be said to pervade the whole story. It is significant that the first service which Valérie asks Gustave to do her after they have become intimate is to procure her secretly a little rouge, which her husband objects to her using. With the odour of eau-de-Cologne is blended an odour of propriety and veneration which is so powerful that it is almost obnoxious, and a supernaturalness in the matter of the affections which is both silly and unbeautiful. Valérie is *enceinte* when Gustave conceives his passion for her, but this circumstance has no curative effect on him, though he lives in intimate companionship with her until her son is born. They wax enthusiastic together over Ossian and Clarissa Harlowe. Gustave never feels the slightest jealousy of the Count, nor does the Count of him. It is with the Count's hand in his that Gustave dies. Love is, in short, so purified, so unnaturally seraphic, that with its passion it has also lost its poetry. This is doubly significant when we happen to know how little seraphic was the life with which this poetess of love had prepared herself to write her novel, and how cleverly she herself managed to reconcile the sacred with the more carnal aspects of love.

Lamartine and his Elvire are the last couple on whose relations we have time to dwell.

Lamartine's youthful poems treated of love, but of a love so pure that it was called "une prière à deux." It was depicted with the transfiguring ideality which is the result of the death of the beloved one. The poet presses to his lips the crucifix which she kissed before she died, and the poem *Le Crucifix* is so soulful that we believe Lamartine when he tells us in a note appended to it: "I never re-read these verses." In his novel, *Raphael*, a much later work, he gives us the real facts of the same love story, and these throw a new light on the famous poems.

Julie, to give the lady known by the name of Elvire her real name, is a creole, aged twenty-eight. She is an orphan,

and has married a man of seventy, a famous scientist, that she may have a protector; but her actual relation to him has never been anything but that of a daughter to a father. She has an affection of the heart which may at any time prove fatal. By the Lake of Bourget in Savoy (the lake of which Lamartine has sung so beautifully), where she is spending the autumn for the sake of her health, she meets Raphael, the young hero of the book, a man differing in nothing but name from its author, who in its pages gives us not only real facts, but even calls his friends and acquaintances by their real names. He describes himself as he was then—twenty-four years old, young and poor, solitary and shy, tender-hearted and given to enthusiasms, already a little *blasé* from much dissipation, tired of all the commonplace and dissolute amours in which he had hitherto indulged.

It cannot be said that Lamartine gave an altogether too unfavourable description of himself. The delicacy and refinement of Raphael's feelings was such that his comrades used laughingly to declare that he was home-sick for heaven. In a somewhat clumsy manner Lamartine attempts to give us an idea of this refinement: "If he had wielded the brush, he would have painted the Madonna of Foligno; if the chisel, he would have sculptured Canova's Psyche. If he had been a poet, he would have written the lamentations of Job, Tasso's Herminia stanzas, Shakespeare's moonlight scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Lord Byron's description of Haydee." Fortunately it was not required of him to do any of these things, as they had been done by others. We know that in his efforts at a later period in one of the three directions, namely, as a poet, he did not attain to the level of the masters named.

In *Raphael* we have a masterly description of a young man's ardent love, a love which, though it has taken possession of him heart and soul, is of an almost altogether spiritual nature, partly because its object inspires such a degree of reverence and compassion that the senses are not allowed to come into play, partly because the young man, after leading a loose life with women for whom he has felt no respect, shudders at the very idea of his relation

to this woman, whom he reveres, becoming one of the same nature with his past amours.

He has had love affairs, but he has never been truly in love before. It seems to him as if, when she looks at him, there is a remoteness in her gaze which he has never felt before in human eye. It reminds him of the gleam of the stars, which has traversed millions of miles of space. He has a hesitation in approaching her which makes the distance between them seem impassable. When he at last succeeds in making her acquaintance, it is the name and the position of a brother which she gives him, and with this he is contented and happy. No sooner have they found one another than he feels as if he were relieved from a heavy burden—the burden of his heart. As soon as he gives it away he learns what life in all its fulness is. He feels as if he were floating in the purest ether ; his joy is infinite and luminous as the air of heaven. During the first hours which he spends with her he loses all perception of time; he is certain that a thousand years spent thus would to him be so many seconds. He does not feel like a human being, but like a living hymn of praise.

And this ecstatic mood lasts as long as he breathes the same air with her. They are happy together during the beautiful summer days, and prolong their summer into autumn : "Our summer was in ourselves."

We feel that this description of the bliss of young love is a description of something that really has existed. The young couple are living not far from the place where Rousseau, as a youth, loved Madame de Warens. Raphael is rather younger than Julie—he is twenty-four, she twenty-eight ; this gives their relation a certain resemblance to that between Rousseau and his protectress ; but the emotions of Raphael and Julie are as incorporeal and romantic as those of the other couple were substantially human.

And not only the happiness produced by the presence of the loved one, but the pain of separation, the longing for letters, the fever of expectation when the time of meeting draws near, and the agonies of parting are described, with many admirable realistic touches, in a manner worthy of a great writer.

Raphael lives in the country, Julie in Paris. When he takes a walk, his steps involuntarily turn towards the north, to diminish the distance which separates him from her. His day contains only one happy hour, that which brings the postman with her letter. As soon as he hears the postman's step he is at the window; he meets him at the street door, hides the letter in his pocket, and hastens with trembling knees to his room, where he locks himself in to read it in privacy. Later in the story, when Raphael is in Paris, we have the admirable description of his wanderings on the winter evenings back and forwards across one of the Seine bridges, waiting for the moment when the lamp in her window shall show him that her guests have taken their departure, and that he is certain to find her alone. Note the blind beggar on the bridge, into whose tin cup he never forgets to throw his mite; the striking of the hour and the half-hour by the church clocks; and another delicate little touch—Raphael's hearing gradually becomes so acute that he distinguishes the separate chime of each clock in the chorus.

All this is excellent. Unfortunately the novel as a whole is spoiled by its religious purpose.

The authors of this period could not write of love pure and simple; they felt obliged to mix religion up with it. Lamartine makes his lovers go through whole courses of philosophy and theology together. They hold different opinions, and she is intellectually his superior. He still retains the beliefs of his childhood. In the house of her famous husband she has associated with intellectually emancipated men of science, whose opinions, marked with the stamp of the eighteenth century, she has imbibed. He and she really belong to different generations—she to the generation of the empire, he to that of the monarchy. Faust, when he is catechised by his Gretchen, is obliged to parry her attempt to convert him by explaining his unbelief to her in palliating euphemisms; the opposite happens here; Raphael makes long, fruitless attempts to convert his Julie to faith in God and Christianity. The first time the innocent youth recommends her to seek aid from God, he is astonished when, instead of answering him, she

looks sad and indifferent and turns away her face. He timidly asks her reason for so doing. She answers: "That word distresses me." "What! the word which signifies life, love, and everything that is good—how can it distress the most perfect of God's creatures?" &c., &c. Then she is obliged to explain to him that what he calls *God* is what she calls *law*—an infinite greatness, an absolute, inevitable necessity, something that it is impossible to move with prayers.

To this conviction of hers is due Julie's easy and yet dignified moral attitude. She says: "I was educated by a philosopher, and in my husband's house I have lived in the society of free-thinking men, who have severed themselves entirely from the dogmas and observances of a church which they have helped to undermine; hence I have no superstitions and none of the weak-minded scruples which impel most women to bow their heads under a second yoke, superadded to that which our consciences impose upon us."

It is Raphael who plays the girl's part when, time after time, he supplicates a woman of a spirit like this to return to the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church. "I besought her to seek in a religion of love and tenderness, in the sacred gloom of our churches, in the mysterious faith in that Christ who is the God of tears, in genuflections and prayer, the relief and the comfort which I myself had found in them in my youth." Raphael's attempt at conversion was not entirely successful; he himself was satisfied with the result, but a more strictly orthodox Christian would hardly have been so.

It is love, we are led to understand, which teaches Julie to believe in God. "There is a God," she said; "there is an infinite love, of which ours is only one drop, a drop which falls back into the divine ocean from which we have drawn it. This ocean is God. At this moment I feel, I see, I understand Him by means of my happiness. . . . Yes," she continued, with even more ardour in her glance and voice, "let the perishable names by which we have called the attraction which draws us to one another be forgotten.

There is only one name which expresses it—that is God. He has revealed Himself to me in your eyes. God, God, God!" she called, as if teaching herself a new language; "God is you; God is what I am to you. We are God."

All this impresses us as having more purpose in it than truth to nature. Not such is the eloquence of happy love.

Had Julie's husband, the old philosopher, happened to overhear these effusions, he could have told the lovers that such doctrines and such emotions, far from being Christian, are pure pantheism. We cannot doubt that he would have done so with perfect calmness, for he does not feel the slightest jealousy. He knows that Julie and Raphael write to each other every day, and he also knows the ethereal nature of their love. When Raphael comes to Paris, all he says to him is: "Remember that you have not one friend but two in this house. Julie could not make a better choice of a brother, nor I of a son." It is comical that Raphael, for his part, should feel no disquietude concerning the old man, unless we reckon as such a feeling of regret that he is drawing near to the grave without any belief in immortality; and it is characteristic of the period that even the aged scientist is in the end converted.

The old man has, in a manner, no ground for jealousy. Lamartine has very naïvely introduced into his novel a piece of realism, which, while it explains many things, weakens the edifying effect which he aimed at producing. Julie's reply to Raphael's first confession of love decides once and for all the nature of their mutual relations. She says: "I believe only in an invisible God, who has imprinted His image upon nature, His law upon our instincts, and His morality upon our reason. Reason, feeling, and conscience are the only revelations I acknowledge. None of these three oracles of my life would forbid me to belong to you; my whole soul would prostrate itself at your feet, if this could purchase your happiness. But are we not more certain of the spirituality and eternity of our love when it remains on the heights of pure thought, in regions inaccessible to change and death, than when it degrades and profanes itself by descending to the base regions of sensuality?"

It is, we observe, the love that despises the senses which Julie somewhat affectedly extols. Now, certain as it is that love can continue to exist even when circumstances forbid its complete gratification, it is equally certain that renunciation for the sake of renunciation and of spirituality is contrary to nature. When the religious reaction set in in Denmark, Ingemann, in his youthful works, preached such renunciation. The question whether Julie really favoured the principle, or whether we are not in reality indebted for it to Lamartine, who admired without practising it, must be left undecided. In his reminiscences of his love affairs, Lamartine is in the habit of describing himself as emancipated from all sensual desire. And we know them all, these love affairs ; for the man who, according to his own account, had always such complete control over his passions, had very little control over his pen. We know (from his *Confidences*) how during his meetings with Lucy, the beautiful girl of sixteen, in the cold frosty weather, he was as cold as the winter night. We remember the sentence in *Graziella:* "We slept two steps from each other ; my cold indifference protected me." It may be doubtful whether it was really Julie who enounced the principle of renunciation, but there can be no doubt of the genuineness of the next speech attributed to her. She adds, blushing deeply, that the renunciation she demands of him is imperative—on account of her health ; she has medical authority for what she says ; she would leave his arms like a shadow, like a corpse: "The sacrifice would be the sacrifice not only of my dignity, but of my life."

It is impossible to deny that there is an extraordinary inconsistency between this last utterance and those which precede it, and that this exceedingly practical explanation deprives the spiritual friendship of much of its spirituality. We seem to come down from the seventh heaven and feel the solid earth beneath our feet again.

There follow scenes like those in *Valérie*—projects of suicide which are never carried into execution ; nights spent by the lovers in tender converse, with a thick oaken door between them ; rapt, sentimental ecstasies. This is a love

which finds expression only in lingering looks, languishing that reaches the verge of insanity, sighs that are almost screams, long silences and endless outpourings—never a caress or an embrace. Unpleasant, almost offensive, in any case unnatural, is the manner in which, in this love-story too, our attention is perpetually drawn to the fact that the lovers keep their vow, that their love remains platonic. On the one solitary occasion when there seems to be real danger, there arrives at the critical moment—who? None other than that estimable old man, Monsieur Bonald, with whose theories on the subject of woman and of marriage we are acquainted. He is coming to stay with Julie, arrives at twelve o'clock at night, and is thus saved the grief of seeing his pupils rebels against order. Even in his novel, Lamartine does not miss the opportunity of proclaiming that he was at variance with Bonald, especially as regarded his doctrine of theocratic government. It became the fashion to disagree with Bonald. Chateaubriand himself remarks in his Memoirs (iv. 23): "Monsieur de Bonald was a clever man. His sagacity was mistaken for genius."

Whenever Julie pities Raphael, he answers her with pious outbursts in which he compares her and himself to Abélard and Héloïse. "Have I ever let you feel that I desire ought else than to share this suffering with you? Does it not make both of us voluntary and pure victims? Is not this the eternal burnt-offering of love, which has perhaps not been offered before the eyes of the angels since the days of Héloïse until now?"

When, after studying *Raphael*, we re-read Lamartine's poems to Elvire, we have a new key to the understanding of the idealism and vagueness of this poetic love, which, obliged to renounce sensual pleasures, pretends that the corporeal world does not exist for it. A distinction must, however, be drawn between the later poems and some written much earlier and in a perfectly different tone, a tone which recalls the eighteenth century. Take as examples the poems *À Elvire* (which is in reality addressed to Graziella) and *Sapho*.

We have now enough of examples; let us consider to

what conclusion they have led us. Choosing a simple emotion, but one of those which every school of literature sets itself to express and interpret, and which each expresses and interprets in a characteristic manner, we have examined a number of different specimens of the manner in which it is interpreted by this particular school. Here, as in all the other domains of literature which we have inspected, we have found the natural side of life ignored, or concealed, or blackened, or represented as something to be ashamed of. Chateaubriand and Madame de Krüdener seek out cases in which love is considered to be criminal and sinful, and either describe the triumphant yells of the powers of hell when the hero succumbs or the jubilations of the principalities and powers when the infamy is not perpetrated. We have the same paraphernalia in Alfred de Vigny's writings:

> Les Chérubins brûlants qu'enveloppent six ailes,
> Les tendres Séraphins, Dieux des amours fidèles,
> Les Trônes, les Vertus, les Princes, les Ardeurs,
> Les Dominations, les Gardiens, les Splendeurs,
> Et les Rêves pieux, et les saintes Louanges,
> Et tous les Anges purs, et tous les grands Archanges.

De Vigny makes Satan speak like Eros, that is to say, Eros like Satan. Lamartine enthrones love in his poetry as seraphic, as emancipated from all earthly passion, but in *Raphael* describes it as what it really was, ethereal against its will—which, however, only adds to the merit of the lovers and provides angels and burnt-offerings, these latter of a sweet savour unknown since the days of poor Abélard.

And below everything there is an under-current of hypocrisy. Eudore, who would have us believe that he is made utterly miserable by Velléda's passion, is nevertheless secretly flattered by her having cut her white throat for his sake. He bewails his fall in expressions which convey the idea that he feels tempted to fall again. The authoress of *Valérie* proclaims the moral purity of her heroine in the market-place and clamours of chastity and renunciation in all the newspapers at a time when she herself is peculiarly unfit to be a teacher of morality. Lamartine, as novelist, naïvely gives an explanation of his relations

with Elvire which differs entirely from the impression of them that the public had naturally gathered from the ethereal ecstasies of *Les Méditations*, and ends by smothering the real beauties of his literary art in languid, lachrymose sentimentality.

In the representation of love, as in everything else, men aimed at supernaturalness, and only succeeded in either crippling or hypocritically ignoring nature.[1]

[1] Lamartine, *Graziella; Raphael; Les Confidences; Mémoires;* Madame de Krüdener, *Valérie;* Chateaubriand, *Les Martyrs*, ix., x.

XI

DISSOLUTION OF THE THEORETICAL PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY

In the lyric poetry of Lamartine and Victor Hugo, as in the prose of Chateaubriand, there was, in spite of the unconditioned assertion of the principle of authority, a hidden or germinating antagonism to that principle in *literature*, as demanding unqualified reverence for the past, its writers, and its forms.

It has already been remarked that the great political and social revolution in France did not affect literary *form*. As regarded this, there was no necessity to re-establish the principle of authority; it had never been overthrown. In no domain are the French less revolutionary than in that of literature. The Academy is the one institution of the country which has held its ground since the days of Richelieu, and to-day it has the same name, the same aims, and even the same number of members that it had then. In literature the principle of authority was known by the name of the classic spirit, and the Revolution, far from weakening the classic spirit, had strengthened it. The Revolution itself is a classic French tragedy. Like all other French tragedies, it clothes its heroes in Greek and Roman garb. In their style and language they imitate the republicans of ancient Rome, and it is significant that it is the most cultivated and literary revolutionary party, the Girondists, who adopt the antique "thou" and the antique designation of "citizen." The Jacobins are the direct descendants of Corneille—the same toga style of oratory, the same love of magnificent laconicism. With the same enthusiasm with which Cromwell's soldiers metamorphosed themselves into ancient Hebrews, adopting their names and singing their psalms, the Frenchmen of the Revolution metamorphosed themselves into ancient Romans;

and when David, the Jacobin and intimate friend of Robespierre, left his seat in the Legislative Assembly to paint the Horatii or the Brutus exhibited in 1791, he simply took his associates as models ; as painter he did not need to go a step beyond the boundaries of his own period.

Just as French tragedy, when it came into being, had refused to build upon the foundation of the history of its own country, had turned its back on French tradition and laid its scenes in far-away Rome in the far-off, dimly discerned past, now the Revolution, heedless of history, heedless of the France of its own day, took far-off, unhistorically appreciated antiquity, with its republicans, evolved under such different conditions, as the model to be exactly imitated. The modern Gracchi and Horatii imitated the ancient. There is, as has often been remarked, a Roman loftiness of style in Madame Roland's letters to Buzot. The ladies of the Directory at times took Cornelia, and more frequently Aspasia, as their model, even in dress. In the language of some of Napoleon's earliest letters to Josephine the influence of Latin models is to be traced ; and even when he no longer stands in need of a model, his style is as classic as his profile. His taste in literature was also classic ; his attachment to "les règles" and his admiration of Corneille are matter of history. As long as he is the ruler of France, even those authors who make an attempt at a species of opposition, such as Raynouard, keep in the classic track. A comparison of Werner's *Söhne des Thals* (Sons of the Vale) with Raynouard's *Les Templiers* will show how differently the same subject can be approached. The German poet is as mysterious and incomprehensible, as extravagant and fantastic in his treatment of the theme as the Frenchman with his obligatory alexandrines, his king and his queen, his five acts and his three unities, is well-regulated and law-abiding. Raynouard's play represents a sort of lawsuit between church and state ; the king conducts his case in a most orderly manner ; the Knights Templar conduct theirs in an equally orderly manner, and are thereupon burnt in an orderly manner—orderly, for we see as little as possible of the execution and

of what precedes it ; we only hear of it all in one of those long concluding narrations which were in vogue as far back as the days of Euripides. And the metre is still the metre prescribed by Boileau, that father of evil. The meaning of the clause, which is cut in two by the cæsura, ends with the line, and the lines are as like each other as one penny bun is like another penny bun. There is neither harmony, nor animation, nor rhythm, nor rhyme in them, for *larmes* and *armes*, *époux* and *coups*, *souffrir* and *mourir* can hardly be called rhymes. They resemble molluscs, these lines ; and one of the features they have in common with molluscs is, that it is possible to cut them in two without their showing any less sign of life because of it.

One consequence of this retention of the classic spirit is the exact resemblance between the style of some of the most eminent prose authors of this day and the style of their abhorred opponents, the philosophers of the eighteenth century. We have the most conspicuous instance of this in Joseph de Maistre. De Maistre's inability to comprehend history, his want of the critical faculty and of any deep religious feeling, his tendency to systematise, his argumentativeness, which tempted him to draw hard and fast conclusions—all this in combination, really deriving from the eighteenth century, found expression in the style of that century. Bonald's cold, argumentative style, his craze for reducing everything to formulas, his persuasion that he makes his positions mathematically obvious, show that he too is a child of the century which produced Condillac, and his work a product of the very spirit which he combated. The only difference is, that such a man as Condillac is as clear and consistent as Bonald is changeable and self-contradictory.

A distinguishing feature in both classic prose and poetry is *the domination of reason*. It is against this ruler that literature makes its first revolt in Madame de Staël's emotional style and Chateaubriand's richly coloured prose. Emotion and colour—these are the two great exiles who now return from a long banishment. And, curiously enough, it is not

only his talents but his art theories which make of Chateaubriand a rebel against the principle of authority in literature, the very principle which it was his aim by means of literature to uphold. For classical poetry from its earliest days had sought its subjects and its inspiration in heathen antiquity and heathen mythology, and he was calling upon his fellow authors to open their own and their countrymen's eyes and ears to a poetry diametrically opposed to this, namely, the poetry of Christianity—was, in other words, *attacking literary tradition as the champion of Christian tradition.* His artistic principles show him to be of the new age, his political and social principles mark him as the man of the past; he is two-faced; he gives poetical expression to all the modern emotions, wearing a mask of unchangeable reverence for all the official authorities of the past. It is more especially his style which makes of him a Romanticist before the days of Romanticism. Hence, when first Lamartine and then Hugo follow his example, forsake heathen, and seek their themes in Christian mythology, society is for a time at a loss to know whether it is to recognise a conservative or a revolutionary spirit in these attempts to uphold the sacredness of religion in new ways. But by degrees the germ of revolt against the principle of authority latent in the new literary standpoint develops to such an extent that the countenance of the new school is changed.

It is interesting to trace the stages of this development in Victor Hugo's different prefaces to his *Odes.* In the first (of 1822), which consists of only a few lines, the young poet asserts that loyalty and Christian faith are the standards of true poetry. The nineteenth century, he declares, has first revealed to the world the truth that poetry *does not depend upon the form given to ideas, but upon the ideas themselves.* In his preface to the second edition (published the same year) he further observes that the poet's task now is to substitute for the faded, false colours of the heathen mythology those new and true ones which belong to the Christian conception of the origin of the universe. The ode ought now to speak the severe, the consolatory, the pious language of which an old society, quitting with trembling

steps "the revels of atheism and anarchy," stands in such need.

He earnestly hopes that his readers will not think that he is so conceited as "to wish to strike out a new path or create a new literary style." In the preface of 1824 the same assurances are repeated, in very characteristic words; but we feel that the young poet is now the object of suspiciously observant criticism, and that the name "Romanticist," as synonymous with transgressor of the laws of classic art, is one which men will be very apt to apply to him. He is eager to prove his literary orthodoxy. What is needed, he says, is not novelty, but truth. It is this need which he aims at supplying. Taste, "which is neither more nor less than *authority* in literature," shows him that works which are true as regards their matter ought also to be true as regards their style. This leads to the demand for "local colouring," a demand which the classic authors can hardly be said to have supplied. But it is an understood matter that the laws imposed upon the language by Boileau are to be *religiously* observed. Of him Hugo writes: "Boileau shares with Racine the unique merit of having given its permanent form to the French language; this in itself is a sufficient proof that he too possessed *creative genius*." Boileau a creative genius! With what derisive laughter will Victor Hugo, ere many years have passed, receive such an assertion!

Of the poet Hugo writes that it is his duty to lead the vanguard of the people like a pillar of fire, lead them *back* to the great principles of *order*, morality, and honour. The flaw in the literature of the century of Louis "the Great" is that its authors invoke the gods of heathendom instead of the God of Christianity. If in this matter, Hugo naïvely remarks, they had acted differently, the "triumph of the sophistical writings" of the eighteenth century would have been much impeded. What might not have been the fate of "philosophy," if the cause of God had been championed by genius instead of by virtue alone!

He vigorously objects to being called romantic. He affirms that he "has not the slightest idea of what is meant by classic and romantic literature." Refusing to be in-

fluenced by all the nonsense written on the subject at that time, he in the following sensible utterance declares the distinction to be an empty and meaningless one: "It is an acknowledged fact that every literature receives an impression, in some cases strong, in some weak, from the climate, customs, and history of the nation of which it is the expression. David, Homer, Virgil, Tasso, Milton, Corneille, men each one of whom represents a literature and a nation, have nothing in common but genius." It is impossible, therefore, to divide them into classical and romantic poets. He combats the assertion that the literary revival (evidently referring to Chateaubriand) is an outcome of the political revolution. "The literature of to-day may to a certain extent be the result of the Revolution, without on that account being its expression. Revolutionary society had its literature, *ugly and foolish as itself.* That society and that literature are dead and will never come to life again. *Order* has revived in all the institutions of society; it is also reviving in literature. . . . Just as the Revolution originated in literature, so the literature of our day is *the anticipatory expression of the pious and loyal society* which will most certainly arise from those ruins."

Hugo was mistaken; the literature in question was the exact expression of the intellectual mood of its day, and the attempts at reform which aroused such anxiety were really forerunners of a literary revolution. For they destroyed faith in authority as authority—in this particular case faith in Boileau. From the moment when it was discovered that there were spots even in this sun, it was not possible to confine doubt to the few points where it had first modestly and cautiously insinuated itself. Literary tradition was a principle; it had to be either accepted or rejected.

In reading Hugo's second last preface to the *Odes* (1826) we feel that his thoughts, always turning upon *order*, that favourite idea of the day, are about to drive him from the shore of literature out on to the open sea. He has discovered that order is in reality something different from the regularity which is attained by discipline and

coercion. Employing a simile which occurred naturally to a youth brought up in the neighbourhood of Versailles, with Chateaubriand's descriptions of the luxuriant landscape of North America as his leisure reading, he compares the gardens of Versailles and their carefully clipped, symmetrically trimmed trees with a forest in the New World, and exclaims: "We will not ask, Where here is splendour, where grandeur, or beauty? but simply, Where is *order* and where *disorder?*" He recognises now that regularity concerns only the outward form of things, but that order lies at their very foundation, and is a result of the skilful arrangement of their elements. "A writer is not classic," he says, "because he *slavishly* treads in the footprints which others have left on the road."

We have thus followed Hugo step by step along the path which leads him towards the final breach with the literary principle of authority. One year more, and he throws off the yoke, assumes the leadership of the Romantic School in France, and in its first manifesto, the preface to *Cromwell* (October, 1827), declares that there is a tyranny of the past in literature exactly as there is in politics, and that this tyranny lies like a nightmare on the breast of the young generation: "The train of the eighteenth century still stretches into ours, but should not we young men who have seen Bonaparte be too proud to bear such a train?" Observe that he now, in direct antagonism to the spirit of the Restoration, invokes Napoleon as a species of liberator. And he writes of "that rouged, powdered and patched poetry, that literature of hoops and furbelows." He is aiming his first blow at Boileau.

New as Lamartine had seemed, both in style and matter, he had retained many of the classic circumlocutions. In spite of his aversion to the lyre, he often named it in his poetry, and in choosing his subjects he preferred the abstract to the concrete.

Victor Hugo was as yet almost equally cautious. "Granted that it is advantageous and at times necessary," he writes, "to renew a few worn-out expressions, to replace a few old phrases, and perhaps even to endeavour to

improve our verse by increasing the sonority of its metre and the purity of its rhyme, it cannot be too often repeated that this must be the limit of all attempts at perfecting it. Every reform at variance with the natural accent and genius of our mother-tongue must be regarded as an attack on the first principles of taste."

Neither alteration of the rhythm, nor variability in the position of the cæsura, nor the continuation of the phrase from one line to another (changes all of which he afterwards vindicated), does he as yet consider permissible. In the *Odes* he conforms to the old poetic court fashion (he does not, for instance, say *Convention*, but *Senate*, does not say *shawl*, but *drapery* or *treasure of Kashmir*), only making a few cautious attempts at a change of metre, with the object of rendering the ode style less stiff and heavy.

That court fashion was of the following nature. A small collection had been made of refined expressions, of choice words—the elect, as it were, of language—which alone had admission into poetry. Poets did not say sword, but brand, did not say soldier, but warrior, and they never mentioned such things as guns or knives ; just as Danish poetry for long acknowledged only roses, lilies, violets, woodruff, and at the outside a dozen other flowers as representatives of the whole floral world. The consequence of this was that the supply of words was extremely limited, that there were only a few hundred pairs of noble rhymes, and that the same expressions, which had to be constantly repeated, brought with them exactly the same thoughts and feelings. The poetic oratory of those days was very much on a par with the pulpit oratory of our own. Sublime was the adjective applied to the dignified flow of words in which things were spoken of as far as possible without ever calling them by their real names—and, be it observed, only things that reminded men as little as possible of their earthly nature, of the material side of their being. One result of this was that the direct, unambiguous mention of common things in any work which laid claim to the privilege of classic style at once produced a comic effect. When Lebrun's *Cid* was acted, the word *chambre* called forth a murmur of dis-

approval. It also explains how the attempt made about the time of the earliest experiments in the Romantic style to introduce Shakespeare into France created such consternation. Every one knows that *Othello*, acted in the translation of Alfred de Vigny at the Odéon—that is to say to an audience of students, the least prejudiced and least prudish of Parisian audiences—was hissed because of the occurrence in it of the word "pocket-handkerchief."

Count Alfred de Vigny, who was born in 1797, belonged to a family of ancient lineage, and was brought up a loyal adherent of monarchy by the grace of God. In 1814 he received a lieutenant's commission in the army of Louis XVIII., and he quickly developed into one of the most attractive and most independent literary characters of the day. In several branches of literature it was he who took the first step in the new direction, Hugo who followed. He wrote a historical novel in the style of Sir Walter Scott before Hugo did (*Cinq-Mars*, 1826), had a play acted before Hugo (the rhymed translation of *Othello*, 1829), the style of which created a great sensation, and he forestalled Hugo in introducing freedom and flexibility into lyric poetry. He was the Columbus of the new movement, Hugo the Amerigo Vespucci who gave the newly discovered continent its name.

It is not a matter for surprise that, at a time when authority was upheld on every side, Hugo should have begun by accommodating himself to existing literary rules, nay, by actually believing in them as real laws of poetry and language. But presently he commenced to experiment with them a little, to shake them a little, to doubt them a little, to interpret them in his own way, doing it all with the profoundest reverence, until it became no longer possible for him to observe them, upon which he overthrew them. In one of his poems (*Les Contemplations*, i., vii.) he gives a witty description of the revolution which he ended by making:

> Je suis ce monstre énorme,
> Je suis le démagogue horrible et débordé
> Et le dévastateur du vieil A B C D ;
> Causons.

Quand je sortis du collège, du thême,
Des vers latins, farouche, espèce d'enfant blême
Et grave, au front penchant, aux membres appauvris ;
Quand, tâchant de comprendre et de juger, j'ouvris
Les yeux sur la nature et sur l'art, l'idiome
Peuple et noblesse, était l'image du royaume ;
La poésie était la monarchie ; un mot
Était un duc ou pair ou n'était qu'un grimaud ;
Les syllabes, pas plus que Paris et que Londres,
Ne se mêlaient ; ainsi marchent sans se confondre
Piétons et cavaliers traversant le pont Neuf ;
La langue était l'État avant quatre-vingt-neuf ;
Les mots, bien ou mal nés, vivaient parqués en castes ;
Les uns, nobles, hantant les Phèdres, les Jocastes,
Les Méropes, ayant le décorum pour loi,
Et montant à Versaille aux carosses du roi ;
Les autres, tas de gueux, drôles patibulaires,
Habitant les patois, quelques-uns aux galères
Dans l'argot ; dévoués à tous les genres bas,
Déchirés en haillons dans les halles ; sans bas,
Sans perruque ; créés pour la prose et la farce.

. . . . . .

Alors, brigand, je vins ; je m'écriai : Pourquoi
Ceux-ci toujours devant, ceux-là toujours derrière ?
Et sur l'Académie, aïeule et douairière,
Cachant sous ses jupons les tropes effarés,
Et sur les bataillons d'alexandrins carrés
Je fis souffler un vent révolutionnaire.
Je mis un bonnet rouge au vieux dictionnaire.
Plus de mot sénateur ! plus de mot roturier !
Je fis une tempête au fond de l'encrier,
Et je mêlai parmi les ombres débordées,
Au peuple noir des mots l'essaim blanc des idées ;
Et je dis : Pas de mot où l'idée au vol pur
Ne puisse se poser, tout humide d'azur !

But Hugo, even when he doubts, has not yet reached this stage. He still styles his poetry "cavalier" poetry, stamping himself by a word which recalls the restoration of royalty in England as the poet of the restoration of royalty in France. The rock on which he splits is the impossibility of harmonising religious and literary tradition. This is especially felt in the ballads. Hugo revives memories of the Middle Ages and feudalism. What could be more royalist? But the literature of the age of Louis XIV. had

utterly rejected the Middle Ages and their memories—so what could be less classical? One of the ballads (*La ronde du sabbat*) describes a witches' dance, another treats of sylphs and fairies; the motley superstitions of the old popular legends are revived—Romanticism is not far off. And the tone is anything but classic; in France, as in Germany and Denmark, the style of the popular ballad supplants the dignified, literary style. There is, moreover, in these poems a new patriotic element (*Le géant, Le pas d'armes du roi Jean*) which turns from classic antiquity to the France of the far-off past. Of this national movement, too, Chateaubriand had been the leader; his description of the ancient Gauls in *Les Martyrs* was the first attempt in the new direction; it made a powerful impression (according to his own confession) on such a man as Augustin Thierry, the future author of *The Age of the Merovingians;* we may safely say that it gave the impulse generally to a more graphic and animated historical style. But even this patriotic element was new and foreign to French poetry, was consequently a rebellion against tradition. The revival of old French subjects was accompanied by a revival of old French metres. Here also Chateaubriand led the way with that charming exile's song beginning with the beautiful lines:

Combien j'ai douce souvenance
Du joli lieu de ma naissance!
Ma sœur, qu'ils etaient beaux, ces jours
De France!

a song which was sung on the little rocky island in the Bay of St. Malo as he was laid to rest in the grave which he had hewn for himself there. And the tones of the days of Ronsard and the Pleiades are re-echoed simultaneously by Alfred de Vigny, the brothers Deschamps, Sainte-Beuve, and Hugo.

In May 1828 Alfred de Vigny published, in *Madame de Soubise*, lines like:

La voyez-vous croître,
La tour du vieux cloître?
Et le grand mur noir
Du royal manoir?

Entrons dans le Louvre.
Vous tremblez, je croi,
Au son du beffroi?
La fenêtre s'ouvre,
Saluez le roi.

In June he is followed and surpassed by Hugo in the admirable lines in *Le pas d'armes du roi Jean:*

Cette ville
Aux longs cris,
Qui profile
Son front gris,
Des toits frêles,
Cent tourelles,
Clochers grêles,
C'est Paris!

The metre, the picturesqueness, the melodiousness, and the concision which distinguish such verse were something quite new in French poetry.

It seemed at first as if the principle of authority had received new and powerful support from the re-engrafting of the traditions of Christianity and monarchy upon literature. But it soon became evident that religious and literary tradition could not thrive together. The former at first took refuge under the wings, in the very bosom of the latter, but the inherent antagonism soon revealed itself, and the principle of authority in its literary shape was set aside, nay, overthrown by the new spirit, which had all the appearance of sincerely desiring to uphold the practical, that is to say, the politico-religious principle of authority.

We have now to see how the practical principle of authority came to share the fate of the theoretical, the literary principle.[1]

[1] Victor Hugo, *Odes et Ballades; Cromwell;* A. de Vigny, *Poésies complètes;* Émile Deschamps, *Poésies;* Antony Deschamps, *Poésies;* Raynouard, *Les Templiers.*

XII

DISSOLUTION OF THE PRACTICAL PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY

On a dark, foggy day in February 1854, a little company of friends followed the remains of one of France's most notable men to a Paris cemetery. The procession made its way between two ranks of soldiers, who were there not to show honour, but to preserve order, to the "common trench." Such had been the will of the deceased. When the earth had been thrown on the coffin, the grave-digger asked: "Is there no cross?" "No," was the answer.

No monument shows where that dead man was laid, though his name was known throughout Europe, and there is no cross upon his grave, though he had been an abbé and a priest, in fact for a long period the most notable champion of the church. It was Lamennais who by his own wish was buried thus.

Félicité de la Mennais (it was not till late in life that he gave his name the more democratic form) was born in 1782 at St. Malo; so he, like Chateaubriand, is a Breton; and the obstinacy of his race was innate in his character. The Breton authors constitute what may be called the Vendée of literature; they continue with words the fight which their fathers fought with material weapons.

As a youth Lamennais was slight, thin, and of an excitably lively temperament. At an early age he lost his mother, and after this was even more determined and self-willed than he had been before. His religious vocation was long doubtful; as a youth he devoted much time to music and mathematics, played the flute, and learned the use of various weapons. He fought a serious duel, which proved a hindrance to him in the career which he subsequently

chose, had love affairs, and wrote poetry.[1] He was so little inclined to accept the dogmas of Christianity that he did not make his first communion till he was twenty-two, when he had attained to settled religious convictions. After this he began to study theology, and in 1808, at the age of twenty-six, he took the tonsure. But when the time of his ordination as a priest drew near, he was seized with such horror of the vow he was about to take that he again and again postponed the decisive step, and did not really become a priest until he was thirty-five. His letters of these years show the distracted condition of his soul; the proud heart winced and writhed at the thought of giving the power over itself into strange hands. And things were no better when all was over and the irrevocable vow taken. The first letter he wrote to his brother after the dreaded ordination, to which he had finally been persuaded to consent, had actually taken place, gives a gloomy description of his mental condition:

"Although silence has been imposed on me, I believe that it is both allowable and right to let you know once and for all exactly how matters stand with me. I am extremely unhappy, and it is impossible that I can henceforward be anything else. They may reason as they like, may twist and turn things as they please, to persuade me of the opposite, but there is not the slightest probability that they will ever succeed in convincing me of the non-existence of a fact which I perceive. The only consolation I can accept is the cheap counsel to make a virtue of necessity. . . . All I desire is forgetfulness, in every acceptation of the word. Would to God I could forget myself!"

With such throes as these was the birth of Lamennais' faith in his religious vocation accompanied. He overcame

[1] The following verses date from his earliest youth:

On a souvent vu des maris,
Jaloux d'une épouse légère;
On en a vu même à Paris,
Mais ce n'est pas le tien, ma chère.

On a vu des amants transis,
Ainsi qu'une faveur bien chère,
Implorer un simple souris,
Mais ce n'est pas le tien, ma chère.

his despair; he, to whom it was a necessity to be whatever he was with his whole soul—even if it was the opposite of what he had been before—became with his whole soul a priest. So absolutely did he feel himself one that his first angry exclamation when Rome left him in the lurch in 1832 was: "I will teach them what it means to defy a priest!" He had a strong character and a narrow mind; a born party man, it was his nature to take a side obstinately and blindly, to defend what he for the moment regarded as absolute truth with passionate love and eloquent hate. Hence as soon as the ruling idea of the period takes hold of him he becomes its doughtiest champion—the most ardent, the most consistent, the most sincere and most undaunted defender of the autocratic principle of authority and the unconditional submission which that principle demands. The man who had suffered such agony of mind in yielding up his own reason and will to the will of the church, the one real priest of the Neo-Catholic school, seems, as it were, to grudge other men better conditions than had been granted to himself. When, in language ominous of storm, he proclaims the gospel of authority and obedience, he, beyond all others, makes us feel how personal passion finds satisfaction in the sweeping, universal demand, how the Ego which has felt itself compelled once for all to submit to authority asserts itself by bending and bowing the wills and thoughts of all other men to that rule with which it now identifies itself.

Violent and obstinately independent, Lamennais certainly recognised no authority within his own camp. His remarks upon the other leaders of the school form a pleasing collection of invectives. Of Bonald, for instance, he writes: "Poor humanity! How M. de Bonald should be suggested to me by the word 'humanity' passes my comprehension. The transition is an abrupt one. They say that the poor man has become quite feeble-minded lately." Of Chateaubriand: "The King and he, he and the King—this is the whole history of France. . . . No one can understand, he least of all, how Europe is to dispense with his talents. He prophesies that Europe will fare ill."

Of Frayssinous, who as leader of the Gallican party in the church was his opponent: "You call him moderate. Why? Because your attention has been drawn to something cold in him, which you take to be moderation, but which is only congealed hatred." Such is the tone of Lamennais' letters. There was, nevertheless, in his vigorous and, if not blindly precipitate, at least blindly impetuous character the very stuff to make a matchless champion of the absolute authority of the church—and this, till the end came, he proved to be—a champion whose capacity of subjecting others to discipline was greater than his capacity of allowing himself to be persuaded against his honest conviction.

In 1808 he published his *Reflections on the Position of the Church in France*, a work which was suppressed by Napoleon's government. He greeted the returning Bourbons with enthusiasm. But he was not yet famous. Between 1817 and 1823, however, there was published, volume by volume, a work which kept men's minds in a constant ferment, and gave occasion to violent controversy; between the publication of the second and third volumes its author had to take up his pen in his own defence. This work was the Abbé de la Mennais' *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion.* In it the period of the restoration of ecclesiasticism collects all its powers for a last, decisive battle. We find all the leading principles of the day enunciated with a peremptoriness and a determined consistency in the drawing of conclusions which seem to indicate that the revulsion is at hand.

The tendency and even the title of this book suggest comparison with the work which inaugurated the religious revival in Germany in the beginning of the nineteenth century, Schleiermacher's famous *Reden über die Religion an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (Lectures upon Religion to the Educated amongst those who despise it). Both works aim at counteracting the same thing, the indifference towards religion, the positive contempt for it, prevailing amongst the educated classes. Both make an attempt, now that faith has become weak, to rebuild the edifice of piety upon a new foundation. It is in this attempt that the different nationality of the authors makes itself strongly felt.

Schleiermacher, emotional and fervent, is of opinion that the only hope for religion lies in surrendering all its outworks and leading it back to its inmost stronghold, the purely personal *feeling* of the individual. He tries to penetrate to the very foundation of human existence, to the depth where both consciousness and action originate, to the sources of personal life. He calls upon his reader to try to realise the original condition of the soul, in which the Ego and the object are blent in one, where there is consequently no question either of perception of the object or of perception of a self differing from the object. He describes this as a condition which we are incessantly experiencing and yet not experiencing, since all life consists in its perpetual cessation and recurrence. It is, he says, evanescent and invisible, like the fragrance exhaled by dew-laden flowers and fruits, chaste and light, like a virginal kiss, and holy and fecund, like a bridegroom's embrace; nay, it is not only *like* all this, it *is* all this; for this condition of the human soul is the marriage of the universe, of the All, with reason personalised; in this condition the individual is for a moment the world-soul and feels its infinite life to be his own. "This," says Schleiermacher, "is the nature of the first conception of every living and original energising force in your lives, to whatever province it may belong; it is such a condition that produces every religious emotion."[1]

In consequence of this theory Schleiermacher regards every feeling, every emotion, in so far as it expresses the united life of the Ego and the All in the manner described, as religious. "The feelings, the feelings alone, provide the elements of religion." He maintains that there is no feeling which is not religious, unless it is the product of a diseased or depraved condition, adding a note to the effect that this holds good even of the feelings of sensual enjoyment, so long as they are not contrary to nature or depraved. His endeavour is to rescue religion from antagonism with science and culture by making it out to be the essence of every noble, nay, of every healthy feeling. A true German, he pantheistically maintains that

[1] *Reden über die Religion.* Fifth edition, pp. 50, 54, 56.

the broad stream of life which flows through all created beings is the sacred fountain of all piety and all religions. Therefore he would do away with every definite religious system; even belief in God and immortality does not seem to him to be essential to religion. He exclaims enthusiastically: "Join with me in reverently offering a lock to the holy, outcast soul of Spinoza in the realm of shades. He apprehended the great world-spirit; the infinite was to him all in all, the universe his one and eternal love; with holy innocence and deep humility he mirrored himself in it, and it in return found its most pleasing mirror in him. He was full of religion and of the spirit of holiness."

Even the age of enlightenment did not deal so-called revealed religion a severer blow than did this emotionalism. Schleiermacher, as we see, resolves religion into feeling, and in so doing destroys its authority by making over this authority to the human soul in all its endless variability. All rules, ordinances, dogmas, and principles disappear; each individual is, by a special process, to make everything his own. For Schleiermacher maintains that "however perfectly a man may understand such principles, however firmly he may be convinced that he possesses them, if he does not know and cannot prove that they have arisen in himself as expressions of his own spiritual life and are consequently originally his own, we must not let ourselves be persuaded to believe that such a man is a religious man. He is not; his soul has never conceived; his religious ideas are only supposititious children, the offspring of other souls, whom he, in the secret feeling of his own impotence, has adopted."

Thus essentially Protestant in the good (hence not the sectarian) sense of the word is the religious revival in Germany in its beginnings. It asserts *personal* originality to be the one essential factor in religion, and defines as the province of religion the whole widespread realm of our warm, true feelings. Natural, healthy feeling is always holy, at no time peculiarly holy.

A marked and significant contrast to all this is provided by the principles set forth in Lamennais' great work, which

forms the Latin and Catholic counterpart to Schleiermacher's Lectures. These principles, the programme of pure externality, are as follows:

1. That *feeling* or indirect revelation is not the means by which men are intended to attain to the knowledge of true religion.

2. That *scientific research* or *reasoning* is not the means by which men are intended to attain to the knowledge of true religion.

3. That *authority* is the means by which men are intended to attain to the knowledge of true religion; and that consequently the true religion is unquestionably the religion which rests upon the strongest possible visible (!) authority.

It is to prove these three remarkable and droll assertions that Lamennais has written his four thick volumes. Let us make ourselves acquainted with their very imperfect chain of reasoning.

It is of paramount importance to us human beings to discover an infallible criterion of what is true and what is false. What we seek is *certainty*. But where are we to find it?

We cannot derive it from our senses, for our senses deceive us, says Lamennais. That the senses conjointly correct such false impressions as each sense separately produces, is a fact of which he does not take cognisance. We are, in his opinion, the less certain of any necessary connection between the impressions of our senses and the reality of things, from our not even being certain of our own existence. How we, if we are not certain of that, can be certain of anything whatsoever, is a question he leaves unanswered.

Conviction, the inward feeling that the thing must be so, is, he affirms, as deceptive as are the impressions of the senses. The irresistible force with which a principle imposes itself upon our reason affords no proof of the truth of that principle. Error is always possible. That one may quite well acknowledge one's fallibility generally speaking, and yet regard one's self as certain of the truth in many single, definite cases, is another fact he leaves out of reckoning.

Next comes the turn of scientific research or reasoning. This, he maintains, leads to doubt of everything, for the highest of all principles do not admit of proof; we are not certain, moreover, of the reliability of memory. It is impossible to parry this attack upon the scientific method in so far that it is of course impossible to prove the reliability of memory without pre-supposing the reliability of the memory which is to be proved. But of the indirect proofs of the reliability of memory provided by human experience Lamennais does not say a single word.

He touches provisionally upon the subject of complete doubt. Complete doubt would lead to complete insanity. The spirit of self-preservation compels us to believe and to act according to our belief. It is, in the Abbé's opinion, this want of ability to doubt, or the knowledge that one will, if one doubts, be regarded by other men as ignorant or mad, which forms the foundation of all human certainty. Common consent (*sensus communis*) thus becomes for us the seal of truth, and there is no other. Difference of opinion at once begets uncertainty. A principle or a fact is more or less certain according as it is more or less universally accepted and borne witness to. Hence Lamennais' definition of a science is: A science is a collection of thoughts and facts on which all men are agreed. Though his standpoint is a different one, he resembles the English empirical philosophers of a later day in refusing even to such a science as geometry any foundation but that of common consent. The fact that many a mistaken scientific conclusion has been taken for truth is due, he believes, to the circumstance that science has reached only a small number of human beings. What, he exclaims, are a few hundred savants compared with the whole human race! He strangely enough forgets that the human race has never unanimously accepted a single scientific truth previous to its discovery by men of science, in fact has never shown original unanimity in any belief.

Lamennais asks: When two persons disagree, what do they do after they have in vain attempted to over-persuade

one another? and he answers: They appeal to arbitration. But what is arbitration? Arbitration is *authority*, and this authority declares with which of the differing opinions certainty, or if not certainty, at least probability rests. The fact that the arguments of reason, as such, only create doubt, and the fact that the strongest proof of the mistakenness of an assertion always is: "You are the only one who thinks thus," direct us to the *principle of authority* as the only true and final principle.

Lamennais' theory, consistently developed, would lead to acceptance of the vote of the majority as the proof of truth. But our final destination is, as we know, the Catholic religion. It is interesting to follow the vaults by which the principle of authority, conceived of as it is in this work, carries us straight into the arms of the church.

Lamennais begins by defining all learning, all apprehension, as the obeying of an authority. This is the same as Bonald's theory, that we accept language upon the authority of those who teach us it, and accept along with it the truths which are necessary to self-preservation, truths which God in his all-powerful word (*i.e.* language) has revealed to every people upon earth. Our intellectual life, *the law of which is obedience*, is, then, simply a participation in the highest reason, a perfect harmony with the witness which the infinite being has borne of himself. Divine reason, which communicates itself by means of language, is the first cause of the existence of reasonable beings, and faith their necessary manner of being. Thus the principle of certainty and the principle of life are one.

Man being created for truth, the reason of universal humanity cannot err. Very different is it with the reason of the individual, which can be overwhelmed by doubt. If it separates itself from society it dies. *Væ soli!* exclaims Lamennais. The proud man imagines when he is required to bow to authority that what is demanded of him is that he shall yield up his reason. He is mistaken. Authority is simply universal reason, reason revealed through a witness. "It animates and preserves the universe which it has created. Without it no existence, no truth, no order."

It is, then, authority alone which gives us certainty concerning religion. "Religion is not only doctrine, not only systematised knowledge—it is also, it is essentially, a law." But there is no law without authority; these two ideas involve each other. Thus religion is necessarily based upon authority—the true religion upon supreme authority. It is defined as: "The sum of the laws which follow from the nature of reasonable beings;" and to learn what these are we must, consequently, have recourse to authority.

Let us follow the connecting thread in this network of sophisms, that we may be able to pull it to pieces. It runs thus: Reason is developed only by the aid of language, the witness. The witness is only to be found in society. Hence man can only live in society. Hence there must have been society, intercourse, between God and the first man. (Observe the unproved assertion of the existence of an Adam, also Bonald's doctrine that God gave Adam language—in short, elements taken from so-called revealed religion as authority, employed to prove that so-called revealed religion rests upon authority.) The necessity of witness involves the necessity of faith, without which witness would be of no effect. Hence faith lies in the very nature of man, is the first condition of life. The certainty of faith is founded upon its harmony with reason, *i.e.* upon the strength of the authority which bears witness. Hence the witness of God is infinitely certain, since it is nought else but the revelation of infinite reason or of supreme authority. No witness is possible except where there is society. Hence no authority or certainty is possible without a society. No human society can exist except in virtue of that original society of God and man which came into being by virtue of the truths or laws originally revealed by his word. Hence these truths cannot be lost in any society without the destruction of that society resulting from the loss. They are consequently to be found in every society. These essential truths are preserved only by means of witness, which has no power or effect without authority. Hence, as there is no authority except in society, there is also no society without authority; where there

is no authority, there is no society. But it is to be noted that there are two species of society; for man stands both in temporal relations to his fellow-men, and in eternal relations to them and to God. These two societies are the political or civil (temporal) society and the spiritual (eternal) society. Consequently there are two authorities, and these authorities are *infallible*, each in its own domain.

This all sounds extraordinarily logical; if *ergo* were a sufficient proof, there would be no want of proofs. But let us examine one or two of the links in the chain of argument.

The Ego, says Lamennais, cannot alone, in solitude, develop self-consciousness. The premise is correct, and we infer from it what there is to infer when we say that the *I* has consequently developed with the assistance of a *you*. This is a thought to which Feuerbach has devoted special attention, and which he has followed out in a variety of directions. But Lamennais, taking as his premise the Old Testament supposition of a single man existing before the rest of the race, builds the doctrine of the communication between this man and God, and all that follows thereon, upon this foundation, which sinks with the edifice erected on it.

Lamennais declares the infallible sign of the truth to be universal consent. *But upon what does the authority of this consent rest?* Has it a cause, or is it simply a fact?

If it has a cause, if the reason of all is to provide the law for the reason of the individual, then that very individual reason for which Lamennais has such a profound contempt is, after all, the supreme judge of the truth. For it is it which, in the first place, invests universal consent with its great importance, and in the second, determines in each separate case whether or not universal consent is to be bestowed.

If, on the other hand, the authority of common consent is a fact, that is to say, a thing which simply follows from our nature, then the certainty with which it inspires us is in no wise different from any other certainty. But Lamennais himself has just been opposing the idea of

certainty resulting from an inward feeling, been denying our certainty even of our own existence, the certainty which we require being *infallible* certainty. What on earth should make belief in authority more infallible than any other certainty?

Lamennais' chain of argument leads us finally to two infallible authorities. The word "infallible" tells us that the Roman Catholic Church is not far off. Infallibility insinuates itself as an inevitable consequence of authority.

There is one point on which all the writers who help to bring about the revival of ecclesiasticism agree, on which Joseph de Maistre, the inaugurator of the revival, is in perfect harmony with Lamennais, its last exponent, little favour though he shows to the other paradoxes of his latest disciple. This point is the infallibility of the Pope. It must be remembered that in the eighteenth century the Papal power had appeared to be defunct. A Pope had corresponded with Voltaire and accepted the dedication of his *Mahomet.* The Pope had himself done away with his faithful Janissaries, the Jesuits. The religious reaction begins by the re-assertion, nay, by the exaggeration even from a Roman Catholic point of view, of the power and importance of the Pope. De Maistre said: "Without the Pope, no authority; without authority, no faith"—that is, without a Pope, no faith. The supremacy of the Pope thus becomes the very fountain, the very kernel of Christianity; in our days (in the writings of Bishop Ségur) the Pope has actually become a sacrament, "the real presence of Jesus upon earth."

De Maistre argued thus: There is no religion without a visible church; there is no church without government, no government without sovereignty, and no sovereignty without infallibility. He cited the principle of the irresponsibility of the king, which, in his estimation, was essentially the same as that of the infallibility of the Pope. Every government, he insisted, is from its very nature absolute, endures no insubordination; from the moment when it becomes permissible to oppose it, on the pretence of its being unjust or mistaken, it can no longer be called a government. And he attempted, as we have already seen,

to prove, by appeal to the unquestioned discipline prevailing on board ship and the unquestioned decisions of the courts of justice, how familiar men are in all other domains of life with that idea of infallibility which it is considered correct to take umbrage at where the Pope is concerned.

This dexterous defence has every merit conceivable in a defence of an irredeemably lost case. That we are obliged to regard the temporal sovereign, though he is not infallible, as being so, does not prove that the Pope, as the spiritual sovereign, really is infallible. The fact that there must always be a supreme power, qualified to demand outward submission, does not prove that this power has also the right to demand intellectual submission. But perhaps outward submission is sufficient? Joseph de Maistre in reality grants that it is. He writes: "As regards the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope, we have no *interest* in throwing doubt upon it. When one of those theological questions which must of necessity be submitted to the arbitration of a supreme court occurs, it is of no interest to us whether it is decided in this way or that, but it is of great interest that it should be decided at once and without appeal."

Lamennais, who like De Maistre arrives at the conclusion that there are two infallible authorities, the authority of the state and the authority of the church, goes, as being a generation younger than his master, a stage farther on the road they both tread. When it proves to be impossible in the long run to uphold the two authorities, each in its own domain, he does not hesitate to decide which of them, in case of a collision, must give way to the other. He draws his final inference thus: "Spiritual authority corresponds to the inalterable law of justice and truth, temporal authority to the force which compels rebellious wills to submit to this law. *Force is necessarily subordinate to law, the state subordinate to the church.* Otherwise we should have to acknowledge two independent powers—the one the preserver of justice and truth, the other blind, and therefore by its nature destructive of justice and truth."[1]

[1] *Du progrès de la révolution et de la guerre contre l'église.*

A haughty conclusion this, and most characteristic of the beginning of the nineteenth century!

It proves what power Lamennais desired the Catholic Church to possess. We have still to note the last vault, by which it is proved that the Catholic Church *is* the authority of which so much has been written. Lamennais writes: "In the choice of a religion, then, the question reduces itself to this—Is there anywhere to be found such an authority as that which we have described, or, in other words, is there a spiritual and visible society which declares (!!) that it possesses this authority? We say a visible society, for every witness is external (remember that the witness of the inward voice is rejected), and we affirm that such witness would afford conclusive proof of the authority spoken of, because it would be the expression of the most universal reason."

"If such a society did not exist, the only true religion would be the traditional religion of the human race, *i.e.* the sum of the dogmas and precepts which are hallowed by their being traditional in every nation, and which were originally revealed by God."

"But if there is such a society, then its dogmas and precepts constitute the true religion." From this climax the rest of the argument follows of itself: "Since the death of Jesus Christ Christian society has incontestably been in possession of the highest authority. Of the various Christian communities the Catholic Church is clearly stamped as that possessing most authority. In it alone are to be found all the truths of which man stands in need; it alone provides him with perfect knowledge of the duties or laws of reason; in it alone he finds certainty, salvation, and life."

Now we have reached the desired haven. But it is not enough that we have reached it in a perfectly disabled condition—we suffer shipwreck within the harbour. For Lamennais frankly confesses at the end of his book that all religions rest upon authority, but that nevertheless the original traditions of all except one have been more or less corrupted by additions which must be regarded as errors. These errors have, however, also been validated by authority,

exist only by its permission. What a confession! It destroys the virtue of his whole argument.

But of this Lamennais is quite unconscious. He approvingly quotes the following utterance of a Catholic writer: "The Catholic religion is a religion of authority, and therefore it alone is a religion of certainty and peace," and triumphantly recalls Rousseau's saying, that if any one could persuade him on Sunday that he was in duty bound to submit in matters of faith to the decision of another, he would on Monday become a Catholic, and that every thoughtful, truthful man placed in the same position would act in exactly the same manner. Lamennais claps his hands with delight at having produced such a proof of its being right for the individual to submit to authority in matters of faith. A pretty proof!

One of two things must be the case. The authority of the Catholic Church either does, or does not, rest upon the universal acknowledgment of its validity. If it does, then the authority of the church *is* universally acknowledged and needs no vindication, since no one denies it. If it does not, then, according to Lamennais' own theory, it is invalid, and no defence is of any avail.

But we cannot stop here. The doctrine that universal consent is the criterion of what is true, must itself prove its truth by being universally accepted. Can one imagine a more cruel instance of the irony of fate than that the doctrine in question should have been not only universally disputed but actually (in 1832) repudiated by the church itself? Lamennais was then suddenly left in the lurch, *alone* with the doctrine that it is the complete unanimity of all which proves truth. Can one imagine a more absurd contradiction? Yes, a more absurd is possible, namely, the very thing which presently happened—Lamennais, the obedient son of the church, bowing to its authority, himself renounced and abjured his doctrine that the authority of the church is the infallible seal of the truth.

But we do not need to look so far ahead as 1832 to see how the supporters of the principle of authority came into conflict with their own principle. Whatever men may

support, their first requirement is liberty to speak. The divine thing about liberty is that even those who hate it need it and demand it. The *Conservateur* began by ardently vindicating the liberty of the press, but was soon exceedingly inconvenienced by it. One party could not well deny the other's right to a liberty which it had claimed for itself; it could not well do it—but it did it. And the very same thing happened in the matter of parliamentary government, or, as it was then called, *the parliamentary prerogative*. It was the journalists and orators of the Catholic and royalist school who, immediately after the restoration of the monarchy, overthrew the first ministry, a ministry chosen by the king. The Catholics desired to get the helm of the state into their own hands. Thus it was the school of the principle of authority which first sanctioned the very opposite principles —liberty of the press in the widest sense of the word and the power of the parliamentary majority. It undermined the ground upon which authority rested.

Following the career of the haughty, passionate priest, Lamennais, we can trace the process stage by stage. The constitution (*la Charte*), between which and the monarchy there was an inseparable connection, ensured liberty of religion, on paper at least. But this liberty of religion incensed Lamennais, who knew that one religion alone was the true one. The foolish phrase was then in vogue, that the right to freedom of conscience is the right to be free from conscience. Lamennais and his followers maintained that a man ought to obey his conscience; and this, in their opinion, their opponents did not do. But they forgot that there is a duty which comes before that of obeying one's conscience, namely, the duty of enlightening it. If it be immoral to act against one's conscience, it is not less immoral to manufacture a conscience with the aid of false and arbitrary principles.

In the name of conscience and authority, then, Lamennais published a protest against the irreligion of the state, that is, against its recognition of no confession—what he called "political atheism." He started the cry: The laws of France are atheistical. He went farther. In a famous

letter addressed to Bishop Frayssinous, and published in the newspaper *Le Drapeau blanc*, he declared that as the generation now to be brought up was a generation born in blood, hard by the scaffold of Louis XVI. and the altar of the goddess of reason, it could only be saved by Christ, only educated by Christianity. But all education in France was, he maintained, atheistic. "Am I exaggerating, Monseigneur, when I say that there are in France educational institutions, more or less closely connected with the University, where children are brought up in practical atheism and hatred of Christianity? In one of these horrible dens of vice and irreligion thirty of the pupils have been known to approach the table of the Lord, receive the sacred wafer, keep it, and commit a sacrilege which formerly would have been punished by law, namely, use it to seal the letters which they wrote to their parents. . . . The influence of the University is producing an ungodly, depraved, rebellious generation."

These indiscreet revelations were very unwelcome to the party in power, who were much annoyed by such attacks on the constitution from a quarter where they had looked for warm support. When Lamennais found that he was treated with coldness and received reprimands instead of thanks, he went a step farther.

We have already seen that his doctrine led to the sacrificing of secular to ecclesiastical infallibility in cases of collision between them. But this was in reality equivalent to acknowledging that the heretical, free-thinking school was right in repudiating the quality of inviolability and irreversibility which the royalist writers ascribed to the monarchy by the grace of God. It moreover made the temporal power dependent on the spiritual, namely, on the Pope. All the bishops of France responded with a manifesto in which they declared the secular to be independent of the Papal power.

Lamennais, the champion of *authority*, now stood in the most strained relations with both the ecclesiastical and the temporal authorities.

His democratic period does not lie within the scope of the present work. We shall only note the germs of the later

development which exist in his original theory of authority. This new theory of authority is fascinatingly unlike the good old hard and fast doctrine propounded by Bonald and De Maistre immediately after the Revolution. The reaction is now much more an affair of reason, consequently much less an affair of immovable principles. Every serious attempt to show the grounds upon which the principle of authority rests must inevitably deal the principle a death-blow; for authority does not rest upon grounds. Lamennais' doctrine, which at first sight seemed so favourable to autocracy, proved on closer inspection to be extremely democratic. The whole edifice rested upon the principle of the authority of the human race. But beneath this fundamental idea—the authority of the human race—another was perceptible; and what was this other but the idea so repugnant to the reactionaries, Rousseau's old idea—*the sovereignty of the people!* Lamennais' readers did not observe this at once; he did not see it himself; but it lay dormant there, and one fine day it awoke and was recognised by all.

Lamennais desired to substitute theocracy for monarchy. But theocracy was not popular, was at any rate only popular when the word was interpreted in the sense of the old proverb: *vox populi, vox Dei*—when God's voice meant the voice of the people. The practical result of his doctrine was, then, merely the weakening of that secular authority which it asserted to be subject to the fiat of the reason of all; for the reason of all, which had at first been personified in the sovereign church, was very soon personified in the sovereign people. When Lamennais at last, in *Les Paroles d'un Croyant*, instigated to intellectual revolt, all the difference in his position was that he now desired theocracy for the sake of the people, instead of, as formerly, for the sake of their rulers.

The Revolution of July produced liberty of the press, and the first use Lamennais made of this was to publish a demand for the emancipation of education from state control and for the separation of the church from the state. He hoped by this means to get education altogether into the hands of the church, and thereby restore its old religious tendency. In the autumn of 1830 he started the famous newspaper

L'Avenir, the watchword of which was the separation of church and state. Appeal to Rome was his answer to every attack; his newspaper was supposed to reflect the exact state of opinion there; but the Vatican remained obstinately silent. The fact of the matter was that it regarded Lamennais' liberal ideas with anything but favour, and had no inclination whatever to relinquish the state grant to the church. His opponents continuing to maintain that his opinions were incompatible with Catholic orthodoxy, Lamennais went to Rome in February 1831, to inquire of the Pope if it was (as he himself put it) a crime to fight for God, justice, and truth, and if it was desirable that he should continue his efforts. He was detained in Rome on one pretext or another until August 1832.

Presently the bull was published in which he, the opponent of indifference on the subject of religion, is declared guilty of religious indifferentism. In it we read: "From the impure source of this indifference springs also the erroneous and absurd, or, more correctly speaking, insane theory that liberty of conscience should be allowed and secured to all. . . . But, as St. Augustine said, *what worse death is there than liberty to go astray?* For it stands to reason that when every restraint is removed that can keep men to the paths of truth, their nature, which inclines to evil, will plunge into the abyss. . . . Amongst these must be reckoned that abominable liberty which we can never sufficiently loathe and dread, the liberty of the press to publish any work whatsoever, a liberty which some dare to champion with such ardour."[1]

This was plain speaking. Lamennais made submission, and his newspaper stopped appearing. But the cup given him to drink was gall and wormwood, and only a drop was

[1] Atque ex hoc putidissimo *indifferentismi* fonte absurda illa fluit ac erronea sententia, seu potius deliramentum, asserendam esse ac vindicandam cuilibet *libertatem conscientiæ. . . . At quæ pejor mors animæ quam libertas erroris?* inquiebat Augustinus. Freno quippe omni adempto, quo homines contineantur in semitis veritatis, proruit jam in præceps ipsorum natura ad malum inclinata. . . . Huc spectat deterrima illa ac nunquam satis execranda et detestabilis libertas artis librariæ ad scripta quælibet edenda in vulgus, quam tanto convicio audent nonnulli efflagitare ac promovere.

needed to make it overflow. From this time onwards he stood prepared to throw himself into the arms of the Revolution. And ere long he took the leap.

What most interests us, who are confining our attention to the first stage of Lamennais' psychological development, is to observe the manner in which his childish faith in authority is undermined as soon as he has the opportunity of seeing the holy thing close at hand. He writes from Rome in a private letter: "The Pope is pious, and has the best intentions; but he has little knowledge of the world, and is completely ignorant of the condition of the church and of society; he sits immovable in the darkness which closes in ever thicker round him, weeping and praying; his task, his mission is to prepare and hasten the final catastrophes which must precede the regeneration of society, and without which this regeneration would either be impossible or incomplete. Therefore God has given him into the hands of men who are as base as it is possible to be. Ambitious, greedy, and depraved, in their foolish frenzy they call on the Tatars to produce in Europe what they call *order*."

Is it not a remarkable coincidence that Lamennais, too, should end by finding a stumbling-block in the word which had determined the intellectual development of the whole generation? Victor Hugo in his endeavour to vindicate the principle of authority in matters of taste at last feels himself obliged to criticise and enlarge the idea of order; Lamennais in his battle for Catholicism is compelled to do the same. With what passionate grief does he describe in his letters the corruption which he finds prevailing amongst the props and pillars of *order* in Rome!

"Catholicism was my life, because it is the life of humanity; my desire was to defend it, and to rescue it from the abyss into which it is sinking deeper every day. Nothing would have been easier. It did not suit the bishops that I should do it. There remained Rome. To Rome I went, and there I saw the most shameful sewer that has ever defiled the sight of man. The gigantic *cloaca* of the Tarquinii would be too strait for so much filth. No god but self-interest reigns there; they would sell nations, sell the

human race, sell the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, for a piece of ground and a few piastres."

Such was the appearance at close quarters of the power whose most dauntless knight Lamennais had been. Was it any wonder that he turned round! Was it any wonder that he, like the priests of the ancient Saxons to whom Renan has compared him, cut down with a well-directed blow of his axe the divinity to whose altar he had summoned the reluctant world!

But even more remarkable than this clearsightedness in a single matter are the gleams of profounder general insight which we now find in Lamennais' letters. Hitherto he had sought absolute truth, and had looked to authority to ensure this. Now he suddenly arrives at the idea of relativity, the idea which most thoroughly and utterly demolishes the principle of authority.

"The older I grow the more it astonishes me to see how all the beliefs which are deepest rooted in us depend upon the age in which we live, the society into which we have been born, and a thousand other equally accidental circumstances. Only think what our beliefs would be if we had come into the world ten centuries earlier, or had been born in this century at Teheran, at Benares, or on the Island of Otaheite!"

There is more philosophy in these two sentences, which forestall Taine's theory of the influence of surroundings, than in all the volumes of Lamennais' famous chief work.

[1] Lamennais, *Essai sur l'indifférénce; Progrès de la révolution et de la guerre contre l'église; Correspondance par M. Forgues; Œuvres inédits par M. Blaize;* Schleiermacher, *Reden über die Religion;* Renan. *Essais de morale et de critique;* Schérer, *Mélanges de critique religieuse.*

XIII

CULMINATION AND COLLAPSE OF THE REACTION

We have been carried on a few years too far by following Lamennais to the period of his conversion to democracy. At the time of the completion of his book on indifference in the matter of religion, that is in 1823, he, like all the other adherents of the principle of theocracy, still aimed at strengthening the authority of the monarch by means of the authority of the church.

Presently the particular monarch in question dies, and Charles X. ascends the throne. He ascends it with all possible pomp and ceremonial. He is taken to Reims to be anointed. The ceremony was performed on the 20th of May 1825, and it seemed as if the old royalist and religious superstitions had risen from their graves for the occasion. One of the oldest of these was the belief that crowned heads possessed the power of curing scrofula. This power had been regarded as absolutely indisputable. A lady of Valenciennes, who had been touched by Louis XV., and who afterwards, in the hope of getting into favour, sent in a medical certificate that she was entirely cured of scrofula, received the answer: "The privileges which the Kings of France enjoy in the matter of the healing of scrofula have been attested by such conclusive proofs that they require no further confirmation."

This was under Louis XV. Under Charles X. people showed themselves no less orthodox. We remember that at the time of the Revolution the ampulla containing the sacred oil was shivered into fragments. In the eyes of pious Catholics this was sacrilege of the deepest dye. Gregory of Tours, the earliest chronicler who tells of the baptism of Clovis, has evidently no idea that this little fig-shaped vial of

heavenly anointing oil was used on the occasion. But some centuries later various traditions on the subject were committed to writing, some of them telling that the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove, others that an angel, had deposited it in the cathedral of Reims ; and these traditions, which had survived as popular beliefs, were now freshened up again. The man who had been priest at the church of St. Remi at Reims in 1793, and from whom the sacred ampulla had been taken by force, came forward and declared that before giving it up he had extracted most of the congealed oil which it contained ; and this he now produced.[1] Another of the faithful asserted that at the time the sacrilege was committed he had collected some fragments of the ampulla, which he had kept until now. The priest and the church officials recognised these fragments as genuine.

So Charles X. was able to rejoice his subjects with the intelligence that he was to be anointed with the sacred oil of Clovis. The fragments of the old ampulla were introduced into a new one, covered with gold and precious stones, and the precious drops were diluted with others. Particulars of the anointment have already been given in connection with the coronation of Napoleon. At ten o'clock on the morning of the following day, the King mounted a beautiful white horse and rode in the midst of a brilliant retinue, and attended by a troop of hussars, to the hospital of St. Mark. There the chief physician to the royal household awaited him at the head of a band of 121 persons afflicted with scrofula. The King, after offering a short prayer in the hospital chapel, set boldly to his task of curing them. The famous surgeon Dupuytren was not ashamed to hold the heads of some of the patients during the comedy.

Lamartine celebrated the anointment of Charles X. in a cycle of poems (*Chant du sacre*) and Victor Hugo in an enthusiastic ode. But on the occasion of the same memorable event there was also written a little song which led to its author's prosecution and punishment. The song was called *Sacre de Charles le Simple*, and the name of its writer was Béranger.

[1] See the notes to Lamartine's *Chant du sacre*.

The tone of Victor Hugo's ode, *Le Sacre de Charles X.*, was, as the following verse shows, orthodox, Biblical, and royalist:

Mais trompant des vautours la fureur criminelle,
Dieu garda sa colombe au lys abandonné.
Elle va sur un Roi poser encor son aile :
Ce bonheur à Charles est donné !
Charles sera sacré suivant l'ancien usage,
Comme Salomon, le Roi sage,
Qui goûta les célestes mets,
Quand Sadoch et Nathan d'un baume l'arrosèrent,
Et, s'approchant de lui, sur le front le baisèrent,
En disant : " Qu'il vive à jamais ! "

The tone of Béranger's poem was disrespectful in the extreme. He apostrophises the sparrows, which, according to an old custom, had been driven into the church to fly about there, and charges them to guard their liberty better than human beings have guarded theirs:

Français, que Reims a réunis,
Criez : Montjoie et Saint-Denis !
On a refait la sainte ampoule,
Et, comme au temps de nos aïeux,
Des passereaux lâchés en foule
Dans l'église volent joyeux.
D'un joug brisé ces vains présages
Font sourir sa majesté.
Le peuple s'écrie : Oiseaux, plus que nous soyez sages,
Gardez bien, gardez bien votre liberté !

O oiseaux, ce roi miraculeux
Va guérir tous les scrofuleux.
Fuyez, vous qui de son cortége
Dissipez seuls l'ennui mortel ;
Vous pourriez faire un sacrilége
En voltigeant sur cet autel.
Des bourreaux sont les sentinelles
Que pose ici la piété.
Le peuple s'écrie : Oiseaux, nous envions vos ailes.
Gardez bien, gardez bien votre liberté !
Gardez bien votre liberté !

With the exception of Delavigne, who is a direct descendant of the eighteenth century writers, and who in

his *Méseniennes* shows himself to have been an equally ardent revolutionist and patriot, Pierre de Béranger was the only poet who had kept aloof from the dominant group of thinkers and talented writers. Born in 1780, he was nine at the time of the storming of the Bastille, which event left as ineffaceable an impression on his mind as did those writings of Voltaire which he read in his childhood. The following anecdote will serve to show how early he arrived at definite conclusions on religious matters. One day when he was only thirteen years old he was standing laughing scornfully at his aunt, who was sprinkling the room with holy water during a dreadful thunderstorm, when a flash of lightning came into the room, passing so close to him that he fell to the ground unconscious. He was so long in recovering that it was feared he was dead. The first thing he did when he opened his eyes was to call triumphantly to his kind, pious aunt: "Well, was your holy water of any use?" The anecdote has an air of truth, and it is told in depreciation of him by orthodox writers. It was in this same spirit that he now attacked the Bourbons, and their holy water was of no use to them.

At the very time when they were making themselves ridiculous there occurred a remarkable phenomenon. A poetic halo developed round the once hated name of Napoleon. He was transformed from a historical into a mythical figure; during his own life-time he became a legendary hero. The compulsory inactivity which suddenly followed on a display of energy that had kept all Europe in constant agitation, powerfully affected the popular imagination. There was in reality no element of greatness in Napoleon's compulsory second abdication, and his plan of placing himself under the protection of England was simply a rash one. But the ignoble manner in which the English treated him added to his fame. The far-off, lonely island in the middle of the great ocean became, as it were, a pedestal for the heroic figure. The real Bonaparte was transformed into an ideal Napoleon. History made him over to poetry and legend.

Even his former enemies could not restrain an expression

of admiration for the man in whose direction all eyes turned. Chateaubriand gave utterance to the famous saying, "that Napoleon's grey coat and hat upon a stick, planted on the coast at Brest, would be enough to make all Europe take up arms."

Béranger wrote the soulful poem *Les souvenirs du peuple*, which perhaps gives us the simplest and most beautiful picture of the legendary hero, but also that which has least resemblance to the real man, for it makes him out to be as kindly as he is great. It is the poem which begins:

On parlera de sa gloire
Sous le chaume bien long-temps:
L'humble toit, dans cinquante ans,
Ne connaîtra plus d'autre histoire.

The reminiscences of the Emperor are put into the mouth of the old grandmother, who at different periods of her life has seen him—first as the victorious general, then as the happy father on his way to Notre Dame, then as the defender of France against the allied armies. A good specimen verse is:

Mes enfants, dans ce village,
Suivi de rois, il passa.
Voilà bien long-temps de ça:
Je venais d'entrer en ménage.
À pied grimpant le coteau
Où pour voir je m'étais mise
Il avait petit chapeau
Et redingote grise.
Près de lui je me troublai!
Il me dit: Bon jour, ma chère,
Bon jour, ma chère.
Il vous a parlé, grand'mère,
Il vous a parlé!

The young men who not long ago had been thankful to break their ranks and escape from the tyranny of military discipline, now began to look back with longing to the heroic days of the Consulate and the Empire. They had been dreaming, writes De Musset, of the ice of Russia and the sun of the Pyramids, and the world of the day seemed

an empty, colourless world. "The King of France sat upon his throne, and some held out their hats for him to throw an alms into them, and others held out crucifixes, which he kissed. And when boys talked of glory, the answer was: 'Become priests!' and when they talked of honour, the answer was: 'Become priests!' and when they talked of hope, of love, of energy and life, it was still: 'Become priests!'"[1]

And so they became priests. Why and how they did it we can learn from the novels which describe the life of the period, such as Beyle's *Rouge et Noire*. This was undoubtedly the priests' golden age. On the 7th of June 1814, three days after the publication of the Charter, the notorious law was passed which prescribed compulsory observation of Sundays and holy-days. Frenchmen were to be Catholics under penalty of fine. Even the adherents of other creeds were obliged to decorate their houses on the occasion of processions of the Holy Sacrament. On the 7th of August 1814 the order of the Jesuits was solemnly re-established. The education of the country was placed in the hands of the clergy. As much of its power as possible was taken from the University, if for no other reason than because numbers of the students had taken part in the defence of Paris against the foreign troops, *i.e.* the allies of the monarchy.

At this time there begins within the Catholic Church itself a short process of fermentation (to which Joseph de Maistre's and Lamennais' feud with Gallicanism belongs), which in the course of a score of years produces the hitherto unknown phenomenon of perfect unity among Catholics. Catholicism and submission to Rome become one and the same thing. And another, kindred phenomenon, quite as unheard of, is witnessed in our century. Religious unity spreads even beyond the bounds of the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestant Church holds out its hand to the Catholic, which in days gone by it had abominated as the Babylonian whore. Glancing at the later religious development of the century, we find that

[1] Alfred de Musset, *Confessions d'un enfant du siècle.*

in our days the difference between orthodox Protestantism and Catholicism is only an apparent difference, only the difference between faith in the infallibility of the Bible and faith in the infallibility of the Pope. The Protestants reject the reason of the eighteenth and the scientific criticism of the nineteenth century; they go back to the creeds of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and do not consider even these orthodox enough; Luther is too advanced for them. Schleiermacher is regarded as a free-thinker by orthodox Germany; Bossuet's attitude is reprobated by French Catholics. He is considered a heretic, in as far as he asserted the independence of the French church. We remember that Joseph de Maistre disapproved of him. Even Montalembert, in his book on the interests of Catholicism in the nineteenth century, mentions him in a condemnatory tone. But the movement does not stop here. The contributors to the Catholic newspapers and periodicals take to writing historical articles which constitute a regular crusade against the great pagan geniuses who founded the civilisation of Europe, such as Pindar, Plato, Virgil. (In Danish literature we have an equivalent in Grundtvig's earliest historical pronouncements.)[1] Hence Montalembert, in the work just referred to, is able to declare triumphantly: "Lying history, parodied history, declamatory history, as written by Voltaire, Dulaure, and Schiller, the men who educated our fathers, would hardly be put up with to-day, even in a feuilleton." A glance through Lamennais' letters is sufficient to persuade us that one great cause of the Revolution of July was the behaviour of the clerical party. The Jesuits acted as the storming force of fanaticism. Missionaries, whose fervent faith was due to their gross ignorance, were sent to all parts of the country. They sometimes converted whole regiments at a time, and these were then led by their officers in a body to the altar.

The worship of the Virgin developed in a way it had never done before. Belief in Mary underwent the same change that belief in Christ had done in ancient days,

[1] See Saisset, *La philosophie et la renaissance religieuse. Revue des deux mondes*, 1853, tome i.

only more quickly. She was gradually transformed from a human into a divine being.

Let us for a moment follow the course of the religious reaction beyond the period under consideration, and we shall see that this movement has progressed with giant steps. The dogma of Mary's immaculate conception, from which, in the twelfth century, the Middle Ages shrank, has been finally accepted and sanctioned. Mary imperceptibly supplants Christ and becomes the deity of France, as she already was of Italy and Spain. In one of the manuals used in the education of Catholic priests[1] we read: "The blessed Virgin is to be honoured as the spouse of God the Father, because with her and in her he begot our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; in her we honour all the divine and adorable perfections with which God has endowed her by communicating to her in abundant measure his fertility, his wisdom, his holiness, and his divine fulness of life." In a work on the immaculate conception written by Archbishop Malou, Mary is represented as being at one and the same time the daughter of God, the spouse of God, and the mother of God; so involved are his explanations of the relationships of the Trinity that one of the conclusions we arrive at is that she is the daughter of her own son. In a book by the Abbé Guillon, *Le Mois de Marie*, she is represented as a kind of chief divinity, to whom consequently it is safest of all to pray. "To be the mother of God means to have a kind of power over God, to retain, if it is permissible to use the expression, a kind of *authority* over him." Authority thus culminates in the Madonna.

The Mariolaters, in the manner of the schoolmen of the Middle Ages, set about collecting proofs of the immaculate conception from the writings of the Fathers. One ecclesiastic, Passaglia by name, collected 8000. Archbishop Malou declared himself able to produce not fewer than 800,000 proofs of it. One's head begins to swim. On Mariolatry followed, about the middle of the century, the recrudescence of the worship of relics; for the relics which had stopped working miracles at the time of the Revolution, began to work them

[1] *Manuel de piété à l'usage des séminaires*, 7 éd. Paris, 1835.

again for the generation educated by the Jesuits. In 1844 Bishop Arnoldi of Treves began to exhibit the coat of our Saviour, a seamless linen garment which is mentioned in a falsified clause introduced (as is convincingly demonstrated by two German historians, J. Gildemeister and H. von Sybel) between 1106 and 1124 into a proclamation of Pope Sylvester (327) as having been given by the Empress Helena to the Cathedral of Treves. It is affirmed to be the garment mentioned in the 19th chapter of the Gospel of St. John as worn by Jesus before his crucifixion. But besides the sacred coat at Treves, there are some twenty more in other parts of the world, all claiming to be equally genuine. The one in Galatia is much older than the one at Treves. The genuineness of several of them is attested by papal briefs. In 1843 Gregory XVI. ratified the genuineness of the coat at Argenteuil; but Leo X. had already, in 1514, acknowledged the claim of the Treves coat, and its champions would not bow to the new decree; the consequence was that pilgrimages were made to both. Görres, in his *Historisch-politische Blätter*, rejoices at the success of the great pilgrimage to the sacred coat of Treves.

The religious reaction reaches its climax in the famous Encyclical of Pius IX., which pronounces free thought to be the delirium of liberty, anathematises civil marriage, separation of church and state, liberty of religion, liberty of the press, liberty of speech, and the erroneous idea that the church ought to make its peace with progress, liberalism, and modern civilisation. But even more severely consistent than the Encyclical are the apologies for it, the German Bishop Kettler's *Die falsche und die wahre Freiheit* and the French Bishop Dupanloup's *La convention du* 15 *Septembre et l'Encyclique du* 8 *Decembre*, which explain and justify the Pope's determined stand against "the insolent repudiation of all the great truths which form the foundation of human society." Let no one, however, imagine that these pamphlets are either very sensational in tone or very full of glaring absurdities. Both in manner and matter they have a strong resemblance to moderate articles in a Danish Liberal newspaper.

To such results did the Neo-Catholic movement lead.

But it is to be noted that these results belong entirely to the domain of political history, and in no way concern literature. *Every movement continues to affect the course of general history long after it has ceased influencing the history of literature.* It affects the latter as long as it has, not only monarchs, nobles, and bishops, but men of distinguished intellect and talent in its service. After 1830 this is no longer the case with the religious reaction in France. The difference between the reaction in 1820 and the reaction with which exhausted and unhappy France was visited after the defeats and the Commune of 1870–71, is that the former vigorous crusade against light had almost every Frenchman of intellect and talent in its service, in its army, whilst the latter could not boast of a single supporter with any literary pretensions.

We have now to see how that first reaction came to an end. It was, in the first place, attacked from without. The daily press began to declaim against the spirit of antagonism to enlightenment; Béranger sang his songs on the subject; one enterprising publisher, Touquet by name, brought out between the years 1817 and 1824 thirty-one thousand copies of the works of Voltaire (1,598,000 vols.) and twenty-four thousand five hundred copies of the works of Rousseau. He was punished and the sale of his books was prohibited; but this aroused such exasperation that the *Globe* prophesied a general apostasy from Catholicism, whereupon the country was again inundated with the Touquet editions.

The government next wreaked its vengeance on a master of language, the rustic simplicity of whose satiric pamphlets proved an effective offensive weapon.

Paul Louis Courier, born in Paris in 1773, was one of the cleverest writers of the age. From his father, a rich bourgeois who in his youth had narrowly escaped being murdered because he had had an amour with a lady of rank, he inherited a burning hatred of the indolent and haughty aristocracy. At the age of twenty he entered an artillery regiment and served in the campaigns of the Revolution, but they only gave him a loathing of war.

From his earliest youth literature had had a strong attraction for him, especially ancient literature, which he studied as a philologist. In 1795 he left his regiment, which was then besieging Mainz, without permission, and occupied himself with translating Latin authors. In 1798 we find him again in the army, in Italy; presently he is studying in Paris; then he returns to Italy in command of a squadron of artillery. He keeps quiet during the Empire, and after its fall lives the life of an agriculturist and Hellenist on his farm in Touraine.

It was the persecution by the victorious clerical party of every countryman, however insignificant, in whom they detected an enemy, which induced Paul Louis Courier to appear before the public as an author. In 1816 he wrote a *Petition to the Two Chambers*, employing for the first time that plain, shrewd rustic style which, with the purest Greek models in view, he was so successful in acquiring. In simple, clear, always moderate language he tells of the injuries inflicted by clerically disposed provincial tyrants upon unfortunate peasants guilty of not having taken off their hats to a priest or of having "spoken ill of the government." He confesses that there is probably a good foundation for the accusations, since in his part of the country the priests are not popular, and very few people know what the *government* is. Then he shows how imprisonment for six months without a proper trial, and misery, sickness, and death brought upon the children and other relatives of the prisoners, are the punishment for perfectly trifling offences. Forty gendarmes are sent to a village directly it falls under the suspicion of "Bonapartism"; the suspected persons are taken naked from their beds and fettered like criminals. "They are carried off; their relations, their children would have followed them, if it had been permitted by authority. *Authority*, Messieurs! that is the great word in France. . . . Everywhere we see inscribed: *Not reasons, authority.* It is true that this authority is not the authority of the councils or of the fathers of the church, much less of the law; but it is the authority of the gendarmes, and that is as good as any other."

Courier did not write books, or even what we generally call pamphlets. He produced his effect with tracts of a few pages. In these, with apparent naïve downrightness, in reality with consummate satiric art, he kept up an agitation against the rule of the hereditary monarchy until his assassination in 1825.

A gem of satiric humour is his *Pétition pour les villageois que l'on empêche de danser.* Its occasion was the prohibition by hypocritical magistrates and priests of dancing in the village market-places. He unveils the hypocrisy which lies at the root of the new holy-day regulations, and the harm which they do. He is perfectly aware of the fact that these holy-days were originally ordained for the good of the serfs and bondmen—but there are no serfs and bondmen in France now. Once their taxes are paid, the peasants now work for themselves, and to *compel* them to be idle is ridiculous ; it is worse even than the old imposts ; those at least benefited the courtiers, but idleness benefits no one. He describes the hot-headed young village priests, who fulminate against dancing and all other pleasures, and compares them with the aged curé of Véretz, who is beloved by his flock for his gentle goodness, but who is hated and persecuted by the authorities because of his having sworn allegiance to the constitution at the time of the Revolution. In a later tract Courier tells of the assassination of this good old man. He writes of everything without resentment, simply ejaculating with a sigh that comes from the heart: "Thy will, O Lord, be done!" He cannot, however, resist adding: "Who could have predicted this in the days of Austerlitz?"

He grants that the rural population is much more settled and much happier now than it was before the Revolution, but he maintains that it is also much less religious. "The curé of Azai, who wished last Easter to have his canopy carried by four male communicants, could not find four such in the village. The peasant is so happy in possession of the land of which he has so lately become owner (the confiscated lands of the nobility and the church) that he is entirely absorbed in its cultivation, and forgets religion and

everything else." Courier allows that Lamennais is right in reproaching the people with indifference in the matter of religion. "We do not belong to the number of the lukewarm whom the Lord, as Holy Scripture tells us, spews out of his mouth ; we are worse ; we are cold."

Nowhere do we find more graphic descriptions than in Courier's writings of the state of society throughout France during the latter years of Louis XVIII.'s reign.

He was again and again imprisoned for his pamphlets ; but he did not allow this to intimidate him. In his *Réponse aux anonymes qui ont écrit des lettres* he writes : "It is not my cleverness, but my stupidity which has landed me in prison. I have put faith in the Charter (*la Charte*) ; I confess it to my shame. . . . If it had not been for the Charter I should never have dreamt of talking to the public of the things that occupy my thoughts. Robespierre, Barras, and the great Napoleon had taught me for twenty years to hold my tongue. . . . But then came the Charter, and people said to me : 'Speak, you are a free man ; write away, print ; the liberty of the press is secured along with every other liberty. What are you afraid of ?' . . . So I said, with my hat in my hand : 'Will you graciously grant us leave to dance in our market-place on Sunday ?' . . . 'Gendarmes—off with him to the lock-up. The longest possible term of imprisonment, a fine besides,' &c., &c."

In another letter he writes with perfect calmness, and yet with biting severity, of the consequences of the celibacy of the priesthood. One of the priests who had inveighed most fiercely against the harmless peasant dances is discovered to be a seducer and murderer. Some years back he had murdered a woman who had been his mistress. In this case his fellow-priests attempted to throw the blame of the murder on her husband. Since then he has murdered and cut in pieces a young girl whom he had seduced. His superiors have sent him, unpunished, across the frontier, so that he is now an honoured preacher of the Gospel in Savoy. Courier shows what crimes, born of superstition and covetousness, are committed in districts where the inhabitants are so orthodox that nothing would induce them to eat meat on

Friday ; he says : " This is the true faith—honest, childlike, without suspicion of hypocrisy," and adds laconically : " They say that morality is founded upon this."

The little satire entitled *Pièce diplomatique* he was obliged to publish privately. It is a letter supposed to be written by King Louis to his cousin, Ferdinand of Spain, in 1823, after the war undertaken by France to restore that depraved Bourbon to his throne had been brought to a successful conclusion. In it Courier satirises Louis's attitude to the constitution. His cousin will not hear of a constitution, but Louis maintains that, far from being burdensome, it is agreeable and advantageous to the king.

Extremely witty is the pamphlet *Simple Discours*, in which Courier ventured to express his disapprobation of the proposal made by the court party to raise a national subscription for the purpose of purchasing the property and castle of Chambord for the heir to the throne. The delicate little Duke of Bordeaux, afterwards Comte de Chambord, was born so long after his father's death that his birth was regarded as a miracle. Lamartine, Victor Hugo, and De Musset all sang of this wonderful event, Lamartine and Hugo comparing the child to Joash. The proposal to raise the national subscription was, thus, made at a time when an enthusiastic feeling prevailed in loyalist circles ; but Courier, true to his principles, opposed it from his peasant standpoint.

Soon all the historians, with the exception of Michaud, began to write in a spirit ominous of danger to the restored monarchy. In 1823 Thiers published the first part of his history, which produced much the same effect as Béranger's songs.

The government of France had always been in the habit of supporting literature. All the rulers of France had done so, with the exception of Napoleon, and the Bourbons were expected to follow the example of their ancestors. But they gave sparingly, in spite of the enthusiastic welcome and homage which they received from both poets and prose writers. On the few disaffected authors they revenged themselves to the best of their ability ; to punish Béranger, his

rival, Désaugiers, was made a court favourite; Delavigne was punished with the loss of his post as librarian.

But more dangerous than the attacks from without were the germs of dissolution which appeared within the school of authority itself. The authors, both prose writers and poets, who formed the Immanuelist or Legitimist group, felt their principles wavering.

We have already seen that Lamennais was on the verge of defection. And his plight was the plight of all the others; the germs of the new were stirring within them in spite of their sincere desire to defend the old.

This is particularly observable in the case of Alfred de Vigny, who belongs to a generation a little younger than Lamartine, a little older than Victor Hugo. His family, as we have seen, was royalist. His father, who had been an officer and a brilliant courtier in the days of Louis XV., lost all his property at the time of the Revolution. After the fall of the Empire, Alfred, then sixteen, was equipped at his father's expense and enrolled in the gendarme corps of the guards. When the Hundred Days came, he attended the king on the first stages of his flight; when they were over, he was made a lieutenant in the royal foot-guards. But the time of active service was past, and nothing remained but the tedium of garrison life; the young man sought compensation in unremitted intellectual activity.

In his boyhood everything had been done to keep his thoughts from turning to Napoleon and all that concerned him. Hence almost before his schooldays were over he donned the white cockade and entered the guard of the Bourbons. But the ungrateful Bourbons, ungrateful because they believed that people owed everything to them, kept him waiting nine years for promotion, when he became captain by seniority.

When he began to write, his books gave dissatisfaction at the stupid court; though their whole tendency was royalist, they were regarded as seditious. He was accused of liberalism because he exalted Richelieu at the expense of Louis XIII. His father's early inculcations of devotion to the house of Bourbon proved of no avail; he now

began to see what that devotion really was—"superstition, political superstition, a groundless, childish old belief in the fealty incumbent on men of noble birth, a kind of vassalage."[1]

Chivalry might, and did, induce him to preserve the outward appearance of a royalist; he would, for instance, have defended the monarchy during the Revolution of July if his services as an old officer had been required; but at heart he was no longer a monarchist—though this by no means implied that he was a democrat. "The world," he writes in his diary, "is vacillating between two absurdities, monarchy by the grace of God and the sovereignty of the people."

In the matter of religious faith he fell away even earlier. In spite of all the angels and archangels, principalities and powers of his youthful poems, he was suited for anything rather than a champion of the faith. By nature he was melancholy and sceptical, so melancholy that no ray of hope or momentary happiness seems ever to have penetrated into his heart, so sceptical in regard to the creed which he confessed with his lips that he nourished a kind of personal animosity to the idea of God and of the immortality of the soul.

As early as 1824 we find him giving expression (in his diary) to his conception of life in the following parable: "I see a crowd of men, women, and children, all sound asleep. They awake in a prison. They become reconciled to their prison and make little gardens in its yard. By degrees they begin to notice that one after the other of them is taken away, never to return. They neither know why they are in prison nor where they are taken to afterwards, and they know that they will never know it. Nevertheless, some among them tell the others what becomes of them after their period of imprisonment—tell without knowing. Are they not mad? It is plain that the lord of the prison, the governor, could, if such had been his will, have let us know the charge on which we have been arrested and all the particulars of our case. Since he has not done it, and

[1] *Journal d'un poète*, p. 47.

never will do it, let us be content to thank him for the more or less comfortable quarters he has given us. . . ."

There is much contempt in this for the theologians, with their pretensions to knowledge, and much acrimony beneath the gratitude to "the lord of the prison." He adds in the same tone: "How good God is, what an adorable jailer, to sow so many flowers in our prison yard! . . . How explain this wonderful, consoling pity, which makes our punishment so mild? For no one has ever doubted that we are punished —we only do not know for what."

Six years later, employing the same parable, he writes: "I feel myself bowed down, O Lord, by the weight of a punishment which causes me constant suffering; but as I neither know my crime nor the accusation brought against me, I reconcile myself to my prison. *I plait straw* in order sometimes to forget it. For this is what human work amounts to. I am prepared for all possible evils, and I thank Thee, O Lord, for every day which has passed without any calamity!"

But two years after this he speaks out plainly: "The world revolts at the injustices entailed by its creation; dread of eternity prevents it from speaking openly; but its heart is full of hatred of the God who created evil and death. When a defier of the gods, like Ajax the son of Oileus, appears, the world approves him and loves him. Such another is Satan, such Orestes, such Don Juan. All who have combated the injustice of heaven have been admired and secretly loved by men."

De Vigny's diary shows that down to the very last days of the hereditary monarchy the connection between the literary, merely theoretical principle of authority and the practical, working principle was perfectly well understood. Germinating Romanticism was not less ardently opposed by the political opposition (who saw in the young school a support of ecclesiasticism) than by the men who from principle adhered to old tradition. De Vigny tells that he asked Benjamin Constant during the winter of 1819 what was the cause of the extreme disfavour shown by the Left to the poetry of the day. The answer was that the party *wished to avoid*

the appearance of breaking every chain, and therefore retained the least irksome, the literary.

When the Revolution of July came, and put an end to the reign of the Bourbons, Vigny's attachment to the ideas of the restoration came to an end too. He writes: "I feel happy that I have left the army; after thirteen years of ill-rewarded service I may regard myself as quits with the Bourbons. . . . I have done for ever with burdensome political superstition."

Lamartine, too, at this time showed signs of an intellectual development of a suspicious nature. He continued to sing his pious hymns, but the orthodox Genevan pastor, Vinet, discovered that this piety was Christianity only in appearance, and that a most unorthodox pantheism lay concealed beneath the Christian phraseology.[1]

And Victor Hugo, whom one would have taken, judging by his début, to be more reliable, soon showed himself, not only by the style of his poems, but by their tone, to be a doubtful acquisition. In 1822, in the ode entitled *Buonaparte*, he had pronounced Napoleon to be a false god, an emissary of hell; and even as late as June 1825, in *Les Deux Îles* (Corsica and St. Helena), he had caused the nations to shout in chorus to the fallen Emperor: "Honte! opprobre! malheur! anathême! vengeance!" and the curses of the dead, as the echo of his fatal glory, to roll like thunder from the Volga, the Tiber, and the Seine, from the walls of the Alhambra, from the grave at Vincennes (Enghien's), from Jaffa, from the Kremlin which he had tried to destroy, from all his bloody battle-fields. Now, a year and a half later, Hugo suddenly strikes a different chord. In the first ode *À la Colonne de la Place Vendôme*, written in February 1827, Buonaparte has become Napoleon, and his glory the glory of France. The occasion of the ode was this. At the conclusion of peace in 1814, Austria had demanded that the Frenchmen to whom Napoleon had given titles which conveyed the idea of supremacy over any Austrian town or province should cease to bear these titles. This was all that was required, no objection being raised to titles which

[1] See Vinet's interesting essays on modern French lyric poetry.

merely recalled the French victories in Austria. The French government had persuaded Austria to refrain from making the agreement arrived at public, and the Austrian ambassador contrived to avoid wounding French susceptibility by placing himself on his reception evenings so near the door that it was not necessary to announce the guests. But in the beginning of 1827 this ambassador was recalled, and his successor was ordered by the Austrian government to decide the matter finally. Consequently, on one of his reception evenings, Marshal Oudinot, Duke of Reggio, and Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, were simply announced by their military titles and their family names. They immediately withdrew, and the affair aroused a great sensation and considerable animosity. As the two officers in question were in high favour with the royal family, the royalist party took up their cause and made it the cause of France. Victor Hugo, who was created to give expression to every prevailing sentiment, and who was conscious before any one else of that movement in men's minds which in the course of a few years was to transform Napoleon into a legendary and national hero, made himself for the first time, in his ode *À la Colonne de la Place Vendôme*, the organ of the cult of the great memories of the Empire. The column, cast of the metal of conquered cannon, which roared as it was melted in the furnace, speaks to the poet in the silent watches of the night, in its character of last remnant of the great empire and the great army. He hears a murmur from the bronze battalions on its sides, hears the sound of names: *Tarentum*, *Reggio*, *Dalmatia*, *Treviso*, sees the eagles on the pedestal whetting their beaks, and feels that the immortal shades are awakening. Who dare think of wiping out this history of France written in blood with the points of swords! Who dare dispute the right of the old generals to the inheritance of Napoleon's glory! Who dare strike at the trophies of France! Every spark struck from the column is a flash of lightning. With magnificent eloquence and ardent enthusiasm Napoleon's history is evolved into a heroic poem, and any sagacious reader of that poem might have foreseen that in the course of a year Hugo (in his poem

"Bounaberdi," in *Les Orientales*, the motto of which is: "Grand comme le monde") would go over to the veritable cult of Napoleon. And since Bonapartism and Liberalism in those days shaded off into each other—*vide* Béranger, Armand Carrel, and Heinrich Heine—it would also have been easy to foresee the possibility of his defining Romanticism a few years later (in the preface to *Hernani*) as "liberalism in literature."

XIV

CONCLUSION

But what did more than anything else to forward the dissolution of the school of authority was the great and crowning piece of folly, as regards literature, committed by the Bourbons in 1824. Chateaubriand was dismissed in the most contemptuous manner from the Villèle ministry, and that at the moment when he had just added to the reputation of the name of Bourbon by the successful Spanish war, which he himself called his political *René*, that is to say, his political masterpiece. Chateaubriand, the man to whom in a manner everything was due, the man who had laid the foundation stone of the whole building that had been erected, was contemptuously set aside.[1] And the ingratitude of his colleagues was as glaring as that of the court, for it was he who had made ministers of Villèle and Corbière.[2]

His popularity amongst the royalists was at this time at its height, and with reason ; for the war in Spain, which he had succeeded in carrying through in spite of all manner of opposition in Europe and the disinclination of France itself, was well calculated to do service to the cause of the monarchy by the grace of God, then in considerable disrepute.

Not that Chateaubriand himself was simple enough to have any respect whatever for that Ferdinand of Spain for whom French troops were to shed their blood, in order that he might be restored to a throne which his own people considered him unfit to occupy. He calls him a promise-breaker and a traitor, calls him a tyrant who allowed

[1] For particulars of this dismissal see Chateaubriand, *Congrès de Vérone*, ii. 502, &c.; and Guizot, *Mémoires pour servir à 'histoire de mon temps.*

[2] *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, vii. 269, &c.

himself to be influenced by the evil passions of his female relations, one of those cowardly tyrants who have no peace until they have done some high-handed deed, and who sit and tremble when they have done it.

Chateaubriand's reason for making war was this. He knew that France was undermined by Bonapartist and Republican plots, which were widely spread even in the army ; he knew that discontent with the restored monarchical government was universal ; therefore, trusting to the friendship of the Emperor Alexander, he determined, in spite of Canning's protests and Metternich's dissuasions, to stake everything on one card. Victory, which he considered probable, meant the suppression of the plots, the union under the white flag of all the different parties, and the firm establishment of the Bourbons on the family thrones of Spain and France. In the case of victory, which the inward disunion of Spain might even make easy (as it actually did), the French nation would behold the spectacle of the tri-coloured flag lowered to the white, and would, for the first time since Napoleon's palmy days, hear tidings of victories won by the arms of France, and that in a country which the great Emperor himself had not been able thoroughly to subdue. All this meant "new laurels for the race of St. Louis," as Chateaubriand says, and—new laurels for its minister of foreign affairs, a fact which he did not forget to take into account.[1]

As we all know, the French army under the command of the Duke of Angoulème, the heir-apparent, succeeded, almost without bloodshed, in liberating Ferdinand at Cadiz, and conducting him back to Madrid. Ferdinand immediately wrote a letter of thanks to Louis XVIII. The answer to this was written for Louis by Chateaubriand ; it is amusing to compare it with Paul Louis Courier's imaginary letter from Louis to Ferdinand. Chateaubriand exhorts the Spanish monarch to refrain from high-handedness, "which, instead of strengthening the power of the king, only weakens it"—a piece of good advice to which Ferdinand paid uncommonly little attention.

[1] Chateaubriand, *Congrès de Vérone*, i. 20, 41 ; ii. 528.

In its giddy elation over this Spanish triumph the court entirely neglected the man to whom the success was originally due. Chateaubriand was no favourite. The Duchess of Angoulème did not address a word to him when he came, on receiving the news of Ferdinand's liberation, to offer his congratulations on her husband's success. Villèle and Corbière were envious of him, and feared that he might wish to take their places ; such an idea had never occurred to him, but they were too deeply in his debt not to bear him a grudge.

The court and the cabinet plotted to bring about his downfall. On the 5th of June 1824 Corbière interrupted him in the middle of a speech in the Chamber, to prevent his enjoying a triumph as an orator immediately before his disgrace. On the following morning, when Chateaubriand, still suspecting no evil, presented himself at the Tuileries to pay his respects to the King's brother, he learned his fate from the manner in which an aide-de-camp said to him: "Monsieur le Comte, I did not expect to see you here. Have you not received anything?" Shortly afterwards his secretary brought him his formal dismissal by the King in the shape of a curt "ordonnance" of a dozen lines. It was little wonder that he felt himself irreparably insulted by the tone of the letter and the manner of his dismissal.[1] In mentioning Villèle's attempt to excuse himself by pleading an accidental delay in the delivery of the letter, but for which the humiliating incident at the Tuileries would not have occurred, Chateaubriand justifiably remarks "that it is hardly the thing to address to a man of position a letter which one would be ashamed to write to a footman who was to be turned out of the house."

Christian humility was not the leading feature in Chateaubriand's character; he did not turn the right cheek when he was struck on the left. He writes very characteristically: "And yet my long and faithful attachment did perhaps deserve some little consideration. It was impossible for me entirely to ignore what I perhaps after all really was worth, or entirely to forget that I was *the restorer of religion*, the author of *The Spirit of Christianity*."

[1] *Congrès de Vérone*, ii. 508–528.

The restorer of religion did not feel obliged to act in the spirit of Christianity. He naïvely says: "It would have been better if I had displayed a humbler, more cast-down, more Christian spirit. Unfortunately I am not faultless, have not attained to the perfection recommended in the Gospel. If my enemy gave me a box on the ear I should not turn round and present the other cheek. If he were a subject I should have his life, or he should take mine; if he were the King . . ."

The sentence does not end, because Chateaubriand's behaviour made any end superfluous. He went over openly to the opposition, and it is to be noted that it was to the thorough-going opposition, which had always seemed to him to be the only sensible thing under a representative government, anything less being impotent. The day after his fall he met with a warm reception from the whole party then in antagonism to the government. An article by Bertin in the *Journal des Débats* announced that he had become the leader of the party, and he was soon also practically the editor of that newspaper.

The whole Seraphic school, of which he was the founder, soon followed him. Lafayette sent him a laurel leaf. Constant flattered him. He began to fraternise with Béranger, who afterwards addressed a poem to him. Two of its verses run:

Son éloquence à ces rois fit l'aumône:
Prodigue fée, en ses enchantements
Plus elle voit de rouille à leur vieux trône,
Plus elle y sème et fleurs et diamants.

Mais de nos droits il gardait la mémoire.
Les insensés dirent: Le ciel est beau.
Chassons cet homme, et soufflons sur sa gloire,
Comme au grand jour on éteint un flambeau.

Victor Hugo addressed a eulogistic and consolatory ode to him (livre iii. ode 2) containing such sentiments as: Was a court the place for you? and: What can be more beautiful than a laurel scathed by lightning?

Chateaubriand's defection was a fatal blow to the monarchy by the grace of God. As long as the illusions

of the restoration lasted, the poets of France were *Immanuelistic* and saw a guardian angel beside every cradle and every bier. With Chateaubriand's illusions vanished the illusions of all the rest, and the Immanuelistic school was succeeded by one to which Southey gave the name of *Satanic*, a name which it accepted—a school with a keen eye for all that is evil and terrible, a gloomy view of life, and a tendency to rebellion.

But while the minds of Frenchmen were still occupied with this unexpected and momentous event, there occurred a more momentous event, which stirred the whole world, namely, Byron's death in Greece.

The news of Byron's death raised the enthusiasm for the first war of liberation that had been fought since the Revolution to fever heat. A new ideal was conceived by the human mind. With Napoleon the glory of energy had passed away, and the heroes of action had for a time disappeared from the earth. Human enthusiasm was, as has been said, in the plight of a pedestal from which the statue has been removed. Byron took possession of the vacant place with his fantastically magnificent heroes. Napoleon had supplanted Werther, René, and Faust ; Byron's Promethean and despairing heroes supplanted Napoleon. Byron was in marvellous accord with the spirit and the cravings of the age. Orthodox dogmas had in the early years of the century overcome revolutionary and free-thinking principles ; now orthodoxy was in its turn undermined and obsolete. There was at this moment no future for either thorough-going unbelief or thorough-going piety. There remained doubt, as doubt—*poetic* Radicalism, the thousand painful and agitating questions concerning the goal and the worth of human life. These were the questions which Byron asked.

But he did not ask indifferently. It was the spirit of rebellion which asked with his voice, and which through his voice made of the young generation in all lands one cosmopolitan society. They united their voices with his in the cry :

. . . . . revolution
Alone can save the world from hell's pollution.

His death did far more to advance the cause of liberty in general than his life. Under the restored monarchy by the grace of God society had been reduced to an extreme of believing subjection to authority, of slavish subjection to theology, of dutiful subjection to power—to an extreme of supineness and hypocrisy. That monarchy was rotten to the core, but supported outwardly by superstition and bayonets. In England Bentham, the Radical philosopher, ashamed to see the reaction successful even in that most advanced of countries, had tried to undermine it by appealing to men's *interests*. Byron let loose all the *passions*. His attack was not directed at any one point; he aimed at revolutionising men's minds, at awaking them to the sense of tyranny.

The politicians of the Holy Alliance period believed that they had bound the spirit of the Revolution in everlasting chains, that they had broken, once and for all, the link which united the nineteenth century to the eighteenth. "Then this one man tied the knot again, which a million of soldiers had hewn through. American republicanism, German free-thought, French revolutionism, Anglo-Saxon radicalism —everything seemed combined in this one spirit. After the Revolution had been suppressed, the press gagged, and science induced to submit, the son of imagination, the outlawed poet, stepped into the breach," and called all vigorous intellects to arms again against the common enemy.[1] The restored monarchy does not really survive him. The principle of authority has never had a more inveterate opponent.

In literature the French reaction begins in the name of *feeling* with Madame de Staël and the whole group of writers connected with her; in society it begins in the name of *order* with Robespierre and those revolutionists who were his associates. Madame de Staël and Robespierre have this in common, that they are both pupils of Rousseau. After the reaction against Voltaire comes the reaction against Rousseau. On the festival of the Supreme Being follows the great Te Deum in Notre-Dame; on Madame de Staël

[1] Gervinus, *Geschichte des 19ten Jahrhunderts*, viii. 172.

follows Bonald. The principle of feeling is ousted, or employed, as in the writings of Chateaubriand, to support authority; the principle of order is merged in the principle of authority, which soon controls every domain of life and literature. This principle is, as it were, personified in the first group of reactionaries, led by Joseph de Maistre and Bonald. It has its epic in *Les Martyrs*, and the idea of order reigns in its poets' descriptions of heaven, of hell, and sometimes even of terrestrial scenery. It has its political monument in the Holy Alliance. The supernatural everywhere supplants the natural. We have not only seraphic epic, but also seraphic lyric poetry, seraphic love, pious pilgrimages, and seraphic predictions and visions.

In no country had the principle of authority in the domain of literary style received such homage and honour as in France. The new school itself begins by acknowledging it. But it unfortunately soon becomes evident that the principle of the newly introduced matter, namely, Christian tradition, is utterly at variance with the traditional principles of literature—and authority begins to totter. Much the same thing happens in another domain. The lady in whose brain the idea of the Holy Alliance originates stands in high favour with the powers as long as her principles seem entirely to coincide with theirs; the moment they discover that it is possible for Christian tradition to unsettle men's minds with regard to authority, they feel obliged to break the tool they have been using; and thenceforward the idea of the brotherhood of humanity is regarded as the source of rebellious feelings and doctrines which undermine authority. Lamennais is the author by whom the principle of authority is most consistently set forth and determinedly upheld during this period; but it soon becomes apparent that beneath his doctrine of the sovereignty of univeral reason lies concealed the revolutionary doctrine of the sovereignty of the people; the principle, as it were, puts an end to itself. At this same time the enemies of the liberty of the press are compelled to make use of this liberty for their own purposes, and the enemies of parliamentary government defend parliamentary government in order to bring about the fall of a ministry which

keeps them out of power. Soon all the personages whom we have watched appearing on the scene, from Chateaubriand to Madame de Krüdener, from Victor Hugo to Lamennais, are at war with the potentates whose cause they began by championing with such ardour, and at war with that principle of authority which had ruled themselves and the age.

And the principle falls, never to rise again.

THE END

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